



**The Treatise of the Four Hundred Stanzas
on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas**
(catuhsataka sastra karika nama)

Aryadeva

[3.2 - COMMENTARY]
Chapters from 9 through 16
(Italics by an anonymous contemporary)

[Text Layout by Jampa Namgyal – November 2009]

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L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

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L4: [B. Refuting true existence of that which perceives objects]

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L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

L2: [CHAPTER 14 - REFUTING EXTREME CONCEPTIONS [OF INHERENT EXISTENCE AND COMPLETE NON-EXISTENCE ...] – THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM: NON-DUALITY OF DEPENDENT ORIGIN AND EMPTINESS - P.265]

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L4: [B. Extensive explanation]

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L6: [b. Explanation]

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L9: [1: Refutation by examining for oneness or difference]

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L9: [a: Actual refutation]

L9: [b: Refuting the rejoinder]

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L9: [4: Refuting truly existent production of the pot from its causes]

L9: [5: Refuting truly existent production by virtue of dependence on parts]

L8: [(b) Briefly refuting that though there are many components, the composite is a truly existent single unit]

L5: [2. Refuting truly existent components]

L6: [a. Just as a composite does not exist truly apart from visible form, smell and so forth, there are no truly existent elemental derivatives that do not rely on the elements]

L6: [b. Refuting truly existent elements]

L6: [c. Refuting the rejoinder]

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L6: [b. This fallacy equally applies to other sectarians]

L5: [4. Applying reasoning which negates the four possibilities in [all] other cases [, with any duality.]]

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L3: [III. Briefly showing the reasoning that establishes absence of true existence]

L3: [IV. Showing the need to understand absence of true existence]

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L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

L2: [CHAPTER 15 - REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT CHARACTERISTICS [OF PRODUCTS] – PRODUCTION / ORIGINATION, DURATION, CESSATION - P.277]

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L7: [(4) Refutation by examining the thing itself and another thing]

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L6: [c. Refutation by examining both self and other]

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L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

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- L5: [3. Refutation by examining whether they are one or different]
- L5: [4. Refutation by examining whether they are existent or non-existent by way of their own entity]
- L6: [a. Refuting that production is truly existent because there are truly existent producing causes]
- L6: [b. Production and so forth are neither truly existent things nor non-things]
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- L5: [1. Brief explanation]
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- L6: [a. Refutation by examining that which is in the process of being produced]
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- L6: [c. Refuting the assertion that a thing before it is produced is what is in the process of being produced]
- L6: [d. Refuting the assertion that the unproduced is what is in the process of being produced]
- L7: [(1) Actual meaning]
- L7: [(2) Refuting the justification]
- L7: [(3) Necessity of accepting that the unproduced is being produced, if that which is in the process of being produced is produced by way of its own entity]
- L5: [3. Summarized meaning]
- L3: [II. Concluding summary of the refutations of inherent existence [of production / origination, duration, cessation]]
- L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

- L1: [SECTION II - B : SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON SETTLING [THE PROCEDURE BETWEEN] SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND STUDENTS BY WAY OF [EXPLAINING] THE PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTERS AND ELIMINATING REMAINING COUNTER-ARGUMENTS BY MISGUIDED OPPONENTS.]

- L2: [CHAPTER 16 - REFUTING REMAINING COUNTER-ARGUMENTS – THE DHARMA DOOR OF NON-DUALITY AND THE IRREFUTABILITY OF THE MIDDLE WAY - P.289]
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- L3: [II. Eliminating remaining counter-arguments raised by misguided opponents]
- L4: [A. Refuting reasoning to negate emptiness]
- L5: [1. Impossibility of refuting the thesis of emptiness]
- L6: [a. Actual meaning]
- L6: [b. Refutation by virtue of parity]
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- L6: [a. Actual meaning]
- L6: [b. Refuting the justification]
- L5: [3. Refuting other reasoning]
- L6: [a. Invalidity of negating emptiness of true existence by reason of direct perception]
- L6: [b. Since emptiness exists, its opposite, true existence, is not feasible]
- L4: [B. Refuting adherence to theses which fall into extremes]
- L5: [1. Actual refutation – [the dharma door of non-duality]]
- L6: [a. Refuting that the non-thesis is a thesis]
- L6: [b. Refuting proof that there are truly existent things]
- L7: [(1) It is not feasible that there is true existence on the grounds that specific functional things are truly existent]
- L7: [(2) Refuting the four extremes by reasoning]
- L7: [(3) Not even the smallest particle of true existence can be observed]
- L6: [c. Showing that everything is equally free from extremes]
- L7: [(1) Actual meaning]
- L7: [(2) Inappropriateness of asserting differentiation of truly existent and not truly existent with regard to any phenomenon]
- L5: [2. Refuting the justification]
- L6: [a. Appropriateness of accepting the thesis of emptiness of true existence]
- L6: [b. Difficulty of finding a thesis refuting emptiness of true existence]
- L4: [C. Showing parity of reasoning with regard to true existence or lack of true existence]
- L5: [1. Both emptiness of true existence and true existence are either equally established or not established merely by words]
- L5: [2. Mere designation as truly existent will not make it so]

L5: [3. If there were true existence because ordinary people use the verbal convention that things are truly existent, then being conventionally existent they could not exist as their own suchness]

L4: [D. Refuting non-existence as the thesis]

L5: [1. Refuting that negation of truly existent things makes things utterly non-existent]

L5: [2. As there are no truly existent things that which is non-functional cannot be truly existent either]

L4: [E. Refuting that things are not empty because analogies and reasons to establish emptiness exist]

L5: [1. Showing the invalidity in the form of absurd consequences [of asserting that] there is true existence because there are reasons]

L5: [2. Showing the invalidity in the form of absurd consequences [of asserting that] things are not empty because there are analogies]

L4: [F. Explaining the purpose of teaching emptiness]

L4: [G. Showing that conceptions of extremes of existence are erroneous]

L4: [H. Impossibility of refuting through reasoning that which is free from extremes]

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

L1: [THE COLOPHON - P.301]

L1: [DEDICATION]

L1: [NOTES]

L1: [ABBREVIATIONS]

L1: [MY RÉSUMÉS]

L2: [RÉSUMÉ OF ALL CHAPTERS TOGETHER]

L2: [RÉSUMÉ OF EACH CHAPTER]

L3: [PART I – Explaining the Stages of the Paths dependent on CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS (accumulation of merit)]

L4: [SECTION I - A : Showing how the aspiring altruistic intention is generated after training in the attitudes of a person of intermediate capacity by explaining elimination of the four errors.]

L4: [SECTION I - B : Explaining how to train in the deeds, having generated the practical altruistic intention.]

L3: [PART II – Explaining the stages of the paths dependent on ULTIMATE TRUTH (accumulation of wisdom)]

L4: [SECTION II - A - Extensively explaining ultimate truth.]

L4: [SECTION II - B - Showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students by way of [explaining] the purpose of the CHAPTERS and eliminating remaining counter-arguments by misguided opponents.]

L2: [RÉSUMÉ TABLE:]

L1: [Part II – Explaining the stages of the paths dependent on ultimate truth (*accumulation of wisdom*)]

- SECTION A : Extensively explaining ultimate truth
- SECTION B : Showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students by way of [explaining] the purpose of the chapters and eliminating remaining counter-arguments by misguided opponents.

[GENERAL REFUTATION OF TRUE EXISTENCE]

By cleansing the mind stream with the flowing water of means by which to understand suchness, the previous chapters have made it a vessel fit for the nectar of suchness. The remaining chapters will explain how products which arise and disintegrate do not have even the slightest essence of inherent existence.

(i.e. They are like figures seen in clouds, like swirls at the surface of the ocean. All merely imputed by the mind, but not from the mind only. Not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. All equal and pure in emptiness; non-dual: not two, not one.)

L1: [Section II - A : Extensively explaining ultimate truth]

- Chapter 9 – Refuting Permanent Functional Phenomena – Everything is both cause and effect, whole and part, merely imputed by the mind – the Middle Way in causality: no absolute causality / path, no absence of causality – P.203
- Chapter 10 – Refuting Misconceptions of the Self – There is nothing permanent that is having rebirths, or is being Liberated – P.215
- Chapter 11 – Refuting Truly Existent Time – There is no truly existing absolute time, duration or impermanence – P.227
- Chapter 12 – Refuting Wrong Views – We need a gradual path combining virtuous methods and wisdom. There is no final view to arrive to – P.239
- Chapter 13 – Refuting Truly Existent Sense Organs and Objects – Refuting direct objective perception of an external reality independent of the mind and karma. Everything is like an illusion – P.251
- Chapter 14 – Refuting Extreme Conceptions [of inherent existence and complete non-existence ...] – The perfection of wisdom: non-duality of dependent origination and emptiness – P.265
- Chapter 15 – Refuting Truly Existent Characteristics [of products] – Production / origination, duration, cessation – P.277

L2: [Chapter 9 - Refuting Permanent Functional Phenomena –
Everything is both cause and effect, whole and part, merely imputed by the mind –
the Middle Way in causality: no absolute causality / path, no absence of causality - P.203]

(i.e. General refutation of true existence by refuting permanent functional phenomena.

ASSUMPTION: some things are both functional and permanent, really existing:

- like permanent without being a cause and an effect: ex. from space to mind*
- or permanent and causal without being an effect: ex. particles.*

ANSWER: Everything is both cause and effect, nothing is permanent.)

- ALL PHENOMENA ARE FUNCTIONAL, produces an effect; EVERYTHING IS A CAUSE,*
- without a function it is as non-existent*
- without a function it is not perceptible directly or indirectly*

- A CAUSE NECESSARILY IS ALSO AN EFFECT, because all cause are dependent on other conditions.*
- It cannot be a permanently active cause, it needs other conditions to activate it ...*
- It changes from being non-active, active, then no more active*
- It must have parts, directional and functional; the whole and the parts are not one, not separate*
- It is interdependent with its characteristics; the characterized and the characteristics are not one, not separate*
- It is merely imputed by the mind; it is not one with the mind, not separate; concepts are inter-dependent*

- **EVERYTHING IS BOTH A CAUSE AND AN EFFECT.** There is not limits to this in both direction.
- Because all functional things are in interdependence, everything is impermanent.
- Cause and effect cannot exist simultaneously; one stops, one starts
- Cause and effect cannot exist separately
- Because everything is cause & effect, everything is impermanent
- Nothing last even a moment, everything is continually changing, a continuous flow of interdependence.
- So everything is just an illusion, everything is empty of inherent existence.
- **BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS DEPENDENTLY ARISING, EVERYTHING IS EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE**
- It is the mind that puts names on the flow, and then thinks things really exist on their own.

- About liberation & a liberated self
- Liberation is, like space, a negation, not a functional thing. Otherwise as an effect, it would also be a cause, and there would be no end.
- No self imputed on the aggregates is liberated, thus no real functional liberation; it is just a concept.
- There would be no need for consciousness at liberation; and there is no person without consciousness
- at liberation there is no more seed of consciousness either
- There no need to speculate about anything after liberation, after the cessation of those illusions
- There is no other self outside of the aggregates that could be liberated
- So thinking about liberating a self is a mistake
- To maintain morality, the belief in a self may be necessary for beginners).

L3: [I. Refuting permanent functional phenomena in general]

L4: [A. Actual meaning]

- \ ###
- \ 201.
- \ ALL ARE PRODUCED FOR THEIR EFFECT,
- \ THUS NONE ARE PERMANENT.
- \ There are no Tathagatas other than
- \ Subduers [who know] things as they are.

(i.e. Everything is a cause and an effect, thus impermanent. First, without being a cause of something / functional, anything would be as if non-existent – not even perceptible by the six senses; and there were be no need to talk about it. So everything produced is a cause / functional.

-- Second, since their causing-action is necessarily triggered and modulated by their own causes and conditions, all causes are also an effect.

-- Beside being dependent on other causes and conditions, and having a triggered beginning for its casing function, there is necessary an end to this causing-action, thus they are all impermanent.)

(i.e. All is functional phenomena = causing an effect, and being dependent on other causes & conditions, thus nothing is permanent -- this apply to space, time, mind, self, particles ... Functional things are by definition the causes of some effects, their functions, and are themselves the results of causes and conditions, because there is no absolute cause producing an absolute result 100% of the time whatever happen. There are always mitigating conditions. Thus functional phenomena are both cause and effect. And they are not permanent, because as effect they cannot be there before the production, and as cause they have to go away after the production otherwise there would be continuous production.

-- This means that the division of the categories of existent phenomena into permanent and functional / impermanent is artificial.

-- Everything is functional / impermanent.

-- There is absolutely nothing permanent.

-- The four types of permanent phenomena (see bellow) are thus not valid: space, analytical cessation, non-analytical cessation, and even suchness.

-- And all functional phenomena -- form, sense organs, objects, consciousness, mind, mental factors, self, karma, concepts ... -- are all both cause and effect, impermanent, not independent, not self

-- Everything is in dependence, everything is empty of inherent existence

-- So "permanent" and "functional" are contradictory terms.)

(-- A functional thing always has a cause, while that which is permanent never has. It is impossible for a functional thing to be neither cause nor effect, nor for it to be only a cause but not itself an effect as is claimed, since both are contrary to the normal operation of cause and effect. Anything that undergoes a transformation to produce an effect cannot be permanent, nor can a cause and an effect have totally disparate natures such that the one is permanent and the other impermanent.

-- Assertion: Dependently arising phenomena like pleasure and so forth exist, and the self is the cause that attracts them. Thus the self exists and, moreover, is permanent.

-- Answer: There is no personal self since that which has no producing cause is not a functional thing, nor is there anything permanent which has a cause. [Buddha], the one who knows suchness, said phenomena that come into being causelessly do not exist:

- ~ Phenomena with causes and conditions are known.
- ~ Phenomena without causes and conditions do not exist.)

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L5: [2. Refuting the rejoinder]

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\ ###
\ 204.
\ If the unproduced is permanent
\ Because impermanent [things] are seen to be products,
\ Seeing that the produced exists
\ Would make the permanent non-existent.

.

(i.e. Refuting a proof bases on word association that makes no sense.)

.

(Showing that the following particular method of reasoning gives absurdity when applied to something else:

-- If produced --> impermanent

means that an unproduced self --> is permanent;

-- Then if produced --> exist

would that mean that a permanent / non-produced self --> is non-existent. That is absurd. Thus this proof is invalid.

-- If on seeing that a pot and pleasure are impermanent and produced, one asserts that the self and so forth are by implication permanent, it would follow that because of seeing that a pot and so forth are produced and exist, whatever is permanent like the self should be non-existent like a sky flower.)

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L4: [B. Refuting three substantial existent uncompounded phenomena

(i.e. three permanent existent phenomena types: space,
analytical cessations, non-analytical cessations)]

L5: [1. General refutation]

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\ ###
\ 205.
\ That space and so forth are permanent
\ Is a conception of common beings.
\ For the wise they are not objects perceived
\ Even by conventional [valid cognition].

.

(i.e. The case of space, and the two types of cessations: Space is not a permanent functional thing, it is not a real thing, it is a negation. There is no such things as permanent functional things as proved above. Cessations are also mere negations, the stopping of illusions based on ignorance, not something existing that would be permanent. – Nirvana is the removal of ignorance, or obstructions, like space; it is not a permanent really existing thing.)

.

(-- Assertion: The treatises of knowledge say space, individual analytical cessations, and non-analytical cessations are permanent and substantially existent. Any refutation of this is invalidated by your own assertions.

-- Answer: That is not so. Not understanding the significance of applying the term "space" to a mere absence of obstructive contact and so forth, common people think that uncompounded space and so on are permanent [functional phenomena]. Those who are wise concerning the suchness of functional phenomena, far from thinking they exist ultimately, do not regard permanent functional phenomena even as objects perceived by conventional valid cognition. Only that which does not change is termed permanent. What sutra says is not primarily stated to establish [substantial existence, but to refute the existence of permanent functional things].)

L5: [2. Specifically refuting permanent omnipresent space
(a permanent thing without being a cause or an effect)]

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 ###
\
 206.
\
 A single direction is not present
\
 Wherever there is that which has direction.
\
 That with directions therefore clearly
\
 Also has other directional parts.
.

(i.e. Space is not absolute, permanent, since it depends on directional parts: Some think that space is a real permanent functional thing, not an effect – inherently existing. But a real permanent thing existing on its own would not be dependent on its parts. Since space obviously can be decomposed into parts and directions, and cannot be defined without talking about objects, movement, directions, ... it is not an independently existing thing – inherently existing. There is no absolute referential; it is always relative. Space is an effect dependent on the mind conceiving it. Space and objects, like Nirvana and samsara, are co-dependently arisen concepts, forming an apparent duality that needs to be transcended ... seen through.)

.
(-- Assertion: Space is permanent because it is omnipresent. Whatever is impermanent like a pot is not omnipresent.
-- Answer: The following (the four lines) refutes permanence by refuting omnipresence. It is contradictory to assert that space is omnipresent but partless.
-- The part of space contiguous to an eastern pot is not present wherever there is space which has directions, such as where there is a western pot. It is were, the western pot would be in the east and the eastern pot in the west. If to guard against such a fallacy one asserts that the part of space which is in the east is not in the west, directional space very clearly must have other parts. Therefore one should not accept permanent functional things. Sutra says, "Kasuapa, permanence is one extreme, so-called impermanence is the other extreme." The belief that ultimate truths are permanent functional phenomena is foreign to this teaching.)
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L4: [C. Refuting permanent time (a primary cause, without being an effect)]
L5: [1. If permanent time is accepted as a cause, it should also be accepted as an effect]

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 ###
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 207.
\
 Since time exists, functional things
\
 Are seen to start and stop.
\
 It is governed by other factors;
\
 Thus it is also an effect.
.

(i.e. The case of time: Some think that time is a real permanent functional thing, a primary cause, not an effect – an inherently existing cause. But, no cause is without its own causes and conditions, and time is a cause -- see next verse. All cause, even time, must be triggered and stopped otherwise its effect would be continuous, thus as a causal factor, time has its own causes and conditions, and is impermanent. Time is not absolute, it is also dependent, an effect, thus impermanent. – Also, like space, time obviously can be decomposed into part, and cannot be defined without talking about phenomenon, beginning, ending, measurements, observations, ... it is not an independently existing thing – inherently existing. And, as we will see later, a real origination, duration or cessation cannot be observed, so there is no objective basis for time measurement. There is no absolute time referential, in relativity time is dependent on space, speed, gravity ... Time and things, like Nirvana and samsara, are co-dependently arisen concepts, forming a conceptual system, a theory, that needs to be transcended ... seen through. They are not absolute, but still not useless obviously.)

.
(-- Assertion of Vaidantokas and others ab: Since permanent time exists the beginning and growth of things like a sprout are seen, while in winter and so forth, although other conditions are present, this is seen to stop. One can thereby infer the existence of time which, moreover, is permanent because of not depending on a cause.
-- Answer: Then it follows that sprouts and so forth are constantly produced and there is never a time when they are not produced, because of being produced by a permanent cause.
-- Assertion: Their production depends on other factors.
-- Answer cd: Then it follows that time, too, is an effect, for the intermittent production of sprouts is governed by other factors, being dependent on conditions like heat and moisture. We do not assert that time is non-existent, for it says:

~ The actions of the embodied do not
~ Go to waste even in a hundred aeons.
~ When conditions assemble and the time is ripe
~ Their fruit will mature.)

L5: [2. Reason for this]

.
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\\ ###
\\ 208.
\\ Any cause without an effect
\\ Has no existence as a cause.
\\ Therefore it follows that
\\ CAUSES MUST BE EFFECTS.

.
(i.e. All functional things are cause, and effect, thus impermanent: Time cannot be a permanent thing that is not a cause and has no effect, because a permanent non-functional thing would be as not existent and there would be no need to talk about it. So time is necessarily a functional thing, both a cause and an effect, thus impermanent.)

.
(-- If proponents of time as a cause accept it as such, they should also accept it as an effect.
-- Without the effect it produced, a cause lacks that which establishes it as a cause, for the establishment of a cause depends on its effects. Thus since it follows that all causes must be effects, one should not accept causes that lack effects. Anything accepted as a cause should be accepted as facilitating an effect.)

L5: [3. Contradictoriness of that which undergoes change being permanent]

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\\ ###
\\ 209.
\\ When a cause undergoes change
\\ It becomes the cause of something else.
\\ Anything that undergoes change
\\ Should not be called permanent.

.
(i.e. All causes are modulated, thus are dependent and impermanent: There is no absolute primary cause, inherently existing cause that are not also dependent, not also an effect. All so called causes are always modulated by various other conditions; the effect is never exactly the same. And even the fact that they need to be triggered (activated) to start producing their effect, and never last eternally (they stop causing), mean that they are themselves subject to other causes and conditions. The simple fact that they are cause means that they are also effect, thus dependent, thus impermanent.)

.
(-- A cause such as a seed acts as the cause of something else such as a sprout, through a change from before in its potency. Any functional thing which changes so that its former and later moments are unlike should not be called permanent. Thus one should not accept permanent time and so forth as causes.)

L5: [4. Contradictoriness of that which has come into
existence of its own accord depending on causes]

.
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\\ ###
\\ 210.
\\ A thing with a permanent cause is produced
\\ By that which has not come into being.
\\ Whatever happens by itself
\\ Cannot have a cause.

.
(i.e. A permanent cause would not produce anything: A so called permanent cause would not change in time, would not be triggered, and thus would not be able to produce an effect at one point and not at another. So the effect would be without a cause. That would be absurd; nothing is without cause and conditions. So, there cannot be a permanent functional thing, a cause that is not an effect itself, that is not itself dependent, and thus impermanent. All causes are effects, and impermanent.)

(-- If one does not accept that time, too, changes, it follows that a functional thing, such as a sprout whose cause is unchanging permanent time, has come about of its own accord because of being produced by a cause that has not come into being. Whatever happens by itself cannot have a producing cause, since its dependence on a cause is inadmissible.)

L5: [5. Contradictoriness of that which has arisen
from something permanent being impermanent]

\\ ###
\\ 211.
\\ How can that which is produced
\\ By a permanent thing be impermanent?
\\ Never are the two, cause and effect,
\\ Seen to have incongruent characteristics.

(i.e. An impermanent effect can be produced only by an impermanent cause. All causes must change in time, they must be triggered to start the causing-effect, and stopped otherwise the effect will continue forever. So time, as a supposed cause of the maturation or degradation of things must be itself modulated. Otherwise it is not a cause and that is refuted in verse 208.)

(-- How can functional things such as sprouts be impermanent? It follows that they are not, because of being produced by that which is permanent. This entailment follows because cause and effect are never seen to have incongruent characteristics in that one is permanent and the other impermanent.)

L4: [D. Refuting permanent particles (primary causes, without being effects, or composed of parts)]

L5: [1. Refuting permanent particles]

L6: [a. Unsuitability of that which has parts as a permanent functional thing]

\\ ###
\\ 212.
\\ That of which some sides are causes
\\ While other sides are not is thereby
\\ Multifarious. How can that
\\ Which is multifarious be permanent?

(i.e. The case of elementary components: even elementary components are dependent on directional & functional parts, on their characteristics, and on the mind conceptualizing them, thus impermanent.)

(-- To demonstrate that particles are not truly existent partless phenomena as asserted, it is shown that they have sides and do not therefore interpenetrate completely when they come together to form a composite. Moreover, informing such a composite, particles could not move unless they had parts, such as fore and rear. Since they undergo change during the formation of the composite, how can they be permanent? The causal particles no longer exist once the effect has been produced.

-- Vaisesika assertion: Permanent particles of the four elements activated by the force of karma form the substantial entity of a composite, producing the environmental world and so forth.

-- Answer: That is incorrect, for it follows that when particles coalesce and form a composite, an increase in size is impossible if there is total interpenetration. If some parts coalesce, those that do are causes while those that do not are not causes.

-- It therefore follows that the smallest particle has parts, because some of its sides are causes while others are not. Being multifarious, it follows that it cannot be a permanent functional thing because of having diverse parts.)

L6: [b. Unfeasibility of an accretion which is a separate substantial entity forming
through the coalescence of homogeneous particles]

L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

\\ ###
\\ 213.
\\ The cause which is spherical

\ Is not present in the effect.
\ Thus complete interpenetration
\ Of particles is not feasible.

.
(i.e. Refuting a conceptual proof that makes no sense. -- And it is not possible that there would be no directional & functional parts, that everything would mix without rearrangement depending on directional and functional parts of elementary components. The individuality of parts is not completely annihilated in forming a new result. The result is still dependent on its parts or causes, and those parts have directional and functional parts themselves. -- It is in fact more reasonable to think that the whole is merely a name, and that the real dynamic is still operating at the basic level. But there is no such basic level. Everything is both whole and part, and the whole and its parts are not two, not one. Everything is merely imputed by the mind.)

.
(-- Assertion: Although particles interpenetrate completely because they are partless, a separate accretion of coalesced particles forms, which produces the composite.

-- Answer: It follows that it is not feasible for particles to interpenetrate completely when composites form. If they merge completely there will be no gradual increase in size from the first to the second composite and so forth.

-- Also the causative sphere with the characteristic of appearing to the mind as partless and spherical is not present in the resultant substantial entity, the composite.)

.
L7: [(2) Contradictoriness of asserting that particles do not interpenetrate completely]

.
\ ###
\ 214.
\ One particle's position is not
\ Asserted as also that of another.
\ Thus it is not asserted that
\ Cause and effect are the same size.

.
(i.e. So there is no complete assimilation of the individuality of parts into a new whole, and the elementary components still use their directional and functional parts, they are thus not elementary functional things. They are also whole, or effect. Everything is both whole and part, cause and effect.)

.
(-- Where complete interpenetration does not occur, one particle's position will not be asserted as also that of another. Thus since the causal particles and resultant composite are not asserted to be equal in size, the absurd consequence that the composite is not an object of the senses is avoided. Nevertheless since particles have parts, their consequent unfeasibility as permanent functional things remains.)

.
L6: [c. Refuting that particles are partless prior to the formation of a composite]

L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

.
\ ###
\ 215.
\ Whatever has eastern side
\ Also has an eastern part.
\ Those whose particles have sides admit
\ That they are not [partless] particles.

.
(i.e. Even before being involved into a function or composite, they have sides, and thus they have parts. Thus they are not without depending on parts, functional parts or directional parts.)

.
(-- Assertion: The problem of their having parts occurs when the resultant substantial entity is forming, but prior to that the smallest particles do not have parts.

-- Answer: That is incorrect. If a particle has no sides, it cannot be surrounded by particles on its four sides.

-- If it has sides, such as an eastern one, it definitely must have parts, since any particle with an eastern side must also have an eastern part. For that reason any opponent who holds that particles have sides prior to the formation of a composite admits those particles are not partless ones, because of accepting that they are located within the ten boundless directions.)

L7: [(2) Contradictoriness of particles forming composites when movement
from one position to another is unfeasible for partless particles]

.
\ ###
\ 216.
\ The front takes up, the back relinquishes --
\ Whatever does not have
\ Both of these [motions]
\ Is not something which moves.

.
(i.e. And if they had no sides (like front, back, ...) they would not be able to move, and would not be able to be part of a composite. There is always a possibility to define a direction relative to something else, even if there is no absolute referential or space.)

.
-- It follows that such particles would not move from one place to another. When a thing moves from one place to another, its front takes up a position ahead while its rear relinquishes the rearward position, but partless particles neither take up nor relinquish a position. If it is asserted that they do not move, it is contradictory for partless particles to form the substantial entity of a composite. Thus truly existent particles should never be accepted.)

L5: [2. Unfeasibility of Yogic awareness perceiving partless particles]

L6: [a. Actual meaning]

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\ ###
\ 217.
\ That which does not have a front,
\ Nor any middle,
\ And which does not have a rear,
\ Being invisible, who will see it?

.
(i.e. Refuting the claim that elementary components can be seen in deep meditation. -- Some say that Yogi can perceive elementary components of the external world; that they can see the real origination and cessation of impermanent things by the assembling and dissociation of those elementary components. But if they are elementary, and without sides or parts, how can they be seen. This is absurd. A permanent thing cannot be functional as demonstrated before. Anything perceptible is necessarily functional, thus cause and effect, part and whole, and impermanent.)

.
-- Assertion: permanent particles do exist because adepts perceive them by virtue of the divine eye.

-- Answer: What adept sees such a permanent particle?

-- Seeing is not feasible because such a form -- a particle which firstly has no front, nor any middle, and finally does not have a rear portion -- is not evident to any kind of perception.)

L6: [b. Refuting belief in the existence of permanent particles because there are coarse things]

.
\ ###
\ 218.
\ The effect destroys the cause;
\ Therefore the cause is not permanent.
\ Alternatively, where the cause
\ Exists the effect does not.

.
(i.e. And it is not because we can see coarse things – wholes (or effects) that there are necessarily elementary permanent parts composing them (or elementary permanent causes) – In the case of elementary components that would be the causes of the whole new effect, the cause cannot continue while the effect is present otherwise there would be endless production of effect, nor can the cause stop before the effect is produced, otherwise the effect would be causeless? So the cause and the effect cannot be simultaneous, nor sequential. So these elementary causing particles cannot really exist as we think they do. There is no real (inherently existing) cause, no real effect. It is more subtle than this.)

.
-- Assertion: Since coarse things would have no cause if particles did not exist, particles do exist and, moreover, are

permanent because of being causeless functional things.

-- Answer ab: It follows that causal particles are not permanent, for just as the seed changes and disintegrates when the sprout is produced, the causal particles are destroyed by the production of the resultant composite.

-- Objection: This is not established, for they produce a separate effect without giving up their causal identity.

-- Answer cd: Alternatively, since the presence of the causal particles in a place precludes that of the resultant composite, it follows that they are not cause and effect because of being simultaneous and occupying individual positions, like a pot and a woolen cloth in their respective places.)

L5: [3. Why Buddhas do not mention the existence of permanent particles]

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 219.
\
 A permanent thing that is obstructive
\
 Is not seen anywhere.
\
 Therefore Buddhas never say
\
 That particles are permanent.

(i.e. Anything obstructive is necessary functional, thus cause and effect, part and whole, and impermanent.

Generalization: Anything that can be seen, that can interact with anything (ex. any wavelength or field), is necessarily obstructive, thus cause and effect, part and whole, impermanent. Meaning there is no elementary basic components as sought out by some physicists.)

-- For the following reason, too, particles are not permanent: particles are obstructive in that they cannot be penetrated completely by other particles. That which is obstructive cannot be permanent.

-- The reason why Buddhas never say that permanent particles exist is because they do not perceive obstructive permanent things

Cittamatrins, who refute the existence of particles by applying the reasoning of ultimate analysis but assert that consciousness is truly existent, should accept objects and consciousnesses as they are conventionally accepted, since exactly the same reasoning applies.)

L4: [E. Refuting substantially established liberation]

L5: [1. Refuting the substantially established liberation of our own sectarians]

L6: [a. Unfeasibility of substantially established cessation]

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 ###
\
 220.
\
 If liberation, which is other than
\
 What binds, is bound (i.e. caused) and the means (i.e. causal path) existed,
\
 It should not be called liberation(i.e. independent)
\
 Since nothing is produced from it.

(i.e. The case of the path and Liberation: First, Liberation is not a functional thing because all functional things are both cause and effect, but there should be no observable effect from Liberation; liberation cannot be a cause. – Also, true cessation, like space is not a permanent functional thing; it is not a real thing, it is a negation, the stopping of illusions based on ignorance. The path is not the real cause of Liberation. Liberation is not an effect caused, or produced by the path as if they were absolute cause, and absolute effect. If Liberation was a final effect produced by an absolutely perfect causing path, then it would be dependent and impermanent. It would also be a cause and have further samsaric effect. Thus it would not be called Liberation. -- As demonstrated above, there are no real causes and effects as we usually think they exist. Liberation, like space, is the negation of something else. But this something else, as we will see, is not really inherently existing either – and that is the whole point. Liberation and samsara are co-dependently arisen concepts. Transcendence is going beyond this duality – not taking one side like accepting one and rejecting the other, nor both, nor neither. Transcendence is seeing through illusions created by our own mind, seeing through all opposites / dualities.)

(About real cessations: liberation is just another concept. There is no causal path, and no final result. (i.e. Liberation is taught as the final effect, caused but not causing anything else. A permanent functional phenomena.) If it is a produced functional thing, it would necessarily have an effect, a function. If liberation is caused, and the path exist, then it would be an effect. By there is no effect which are not cause of something else. So it would not be called liberation, because it

would produce something else -- more karma. So "liberation" is not a functional thing, but a mere concept.

-- Finally the chapter presents a critique of liberation as asserted by the opponent. It cannot be a functional phenomenon as claimed, for then it should produce an effect, but none can be identified.

-- Assertion of our own sectarians who do not understand uncompounded phenomena as merely nominal: Although it is true that Buddhas do not mention permanent particles, they say uncompounded phenomena are permanent. Thus there is substantially existent cessation, which is like a dam. If this were not so it would be inappropriate to speak of the third noble truth.

-- Answer: True source bind to cyclic existence, true sufferings are that which is bound and true paths are the means which liberate one from sufferings and their sources. If liberation which is other than these were a functional phenomena, it should facilitate an effect, but it does not produce any effect and not the slightest facilitation occurs. Thus it is inappropriate to call such a substantially existent cessation "liberation." It contradicts what the Teacher said:

"Monks, these five are only names - past time, future time, space, nirvana, and the person." One should therefore accept liberation as a mere term, a mere imputation and not as substantially existent.)

L6: [b. It contradicts the explanation that all suffering is abandoned in the sphere of nirvana]

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 ###
\
 221.
\
 In nirvana there are no aggregates
\
 And there cannot be a person.
\
 What nirvana is there for one
\
 Who is not seen in nirvana?

.
(i.e. The case of what is liberated: the self and the five aggregates are not two, not one: We cannot find a self among the five aggregates individually or together, nor can we find a self separate from them. There cannot be a self liberated. So what is individual Liberation? This is an imperfect concept.)

-- This is followed by a discussion of what attains liberation and what exists as a basis when liberation occurs, in the course of which it is demonstrated that the basis cannot be a permanent truly existent self.

-- ab: The Subduer said, "That which is the complete abandonment, removal, and extinction of this suffering ... the abandonment of all the aggregates, the end of worldly existence and separation from attachment, is cessation and nirvana." According to proponents of functional things as truly existent, this citation means the aggregates are entirely non-existent in the sphere of nirvana. Nor can there be a person imputed in dependence upon them, for neither the reliance nor reliant exist

-- cd: Neither the aggregates nor the person are seen as a truly existent reliance which reaches nirvana through the ending of disturbing attitudes and rebirth. What truly existent nirvana reliant upon that is there? Not the slightest, thus one should accept liberation, too, as a mere imputation.)

L5: [2. Refuting other sectarians' liberation identified with the self]

L6: [a. Refuting the permanent liberation consisting of consciousness imputed by Samkhyas]

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\
 222.
\
 When free from attachment at [the time of] liberation
\
 What good is the existence of consciousness?
\
 Also to exist without consciousness
\
 Is clearly the same as not existing.

.
(i.e. The real nature of the self is not existence, not non-existence: It is wrong to think that a primordial individual consciousness can be Liberated. There would be no need for consciousness at liberation; and there is no person without consciousness.)

(With or without consciousness, there could be no self at liberation: If there is no self in nirvana, then there is no self-consciousness. So it is not existing, not not-existing, not both, not neither. It is beyond conceptualization.

-- Samkhyas assertion: According to us there is no flaw that nirvana is not liberation because of lacking a reliance. When an adept understands that the principal and person are different the process of involvement in cyclic existence such as the great one and so forth stops. When everything subsides into the latent state of the principal, the conscious person remains alone. Thus there is a liberated self.

-- Answer ab: It follows that it is illogical to accept the existence of a conscious person at the time of liberation when there is freedom from attachment to objects, because you assert that the intellect makes known to the person objects to which there is attraction. You also assert that it is the person's nature to be conscious and that this is permanent and immutable. What is the value of accepting the existence of consciousness during liberation? There is not the slightest value, because while accepting the conscious person as an experiencer of objects, the transformations which are experienced no longer exist, having subsided into a latent state.

-- Question: What if the person remains without consciousness at liberation?

-- Answer cd: It follows that to accept the existence of a liberated person without consciousness clearly amounts to accepting the person's non-existence, because of accepting that the person and consciousness are of one nature, being either equally existent or non-existent.)

L6: [b. Refuting permanent liberation consisting of the potential for the existence of consciousness]

.\ ###
.\ 223.
.\ If at liberation a self existed
.\ There could be a seed of consciousness.
.\ Without it there is no speculation
.\ With regard to worldly existence.

(i.e. The true nature of the self and liberation is beyond conceptualization – speculating is useless: There no need to speculate about anything after liberation, after the cessation of those illusions. The real meaning of Liberation is beyond all conceptualization.)

(Without a self, there is no world, no need to speculate.

-- Assertion: There is a self during liberation, for though there is no actual consciousness, the potential to be conscious of objects exists.

-- Answer ab: That too is illogical.

-- If at liberation a self existed, there could be such a potential or seed of consciousness, but at that time there is no consciousness.

-- Objection: If there is no liberated self, there is no liberation and thus cyclic existence is indestructible. Many unwanted entailments arise.

-- Answer cd: It is irrelevant to speculate whether, because there is consciousnesses, [people would or would not enter liberation] or whether, because its seed is truly existent, people would or would not enter worldly existence. It would be relevant if a self as reliance existed but there is no liberated self.)

L6: [c. Suitability of the complete abandonment of conceptions of a self as liberation]

.\ ###
.\ 224.
.\ It is certain that those liberated
.\ From suffering have no other [self].
.\ Therefore the end of the self
.\ Should always be affirmed as good.

(i.e. Let's concentrate on no-self for now: The real nature of the self is beyond conceptualization; what happen after Liberation is imponderable. There no need to speculate about anything after liberation, after the cessation of all illusions. Instead of speculating about what is beyond all conceptualization, we should concentrate on the actual problem: the belief in a permanent self, and the realization that it is the root cause of all suffering. That is a sure thing in the actual context.)

(So don't think about liberating a permanent self -- that would be a mistake: So without the perception of a self based on the five aggregates, there is no more suffering. And there is no other causeless permanent self which does not depend on the aggregates. There is no liberated self.

-- It is certain that in the state of nirvana, people who have gained liberation from suffering by completely abandoning the contaminated aggregates through the total elimination of disturbing attitudes and emotions have no other causeless permanent self which does not depend on the aggregates. Therefore people who aspire to become free should always affirm that the complete ending forever of conceptions of a self is good and should never assert the existence of such a

useless liberated self.)

L3: [III. Arguing the unsuitability of refuting true existence]

.
\ ###
\ 225.
\ The conventional is preferable
\ But the ultimate never is.
\ Ordinary people have some [belief in this]
\ But none in the ultimate.
.

(i.e. Without falling into the other extreme, using a gradual path: On the other hand, we should not fall into the other extreme – nihilism, thinking there is no self at all, no path at all. Between the two truths, or between two extremes, it is preferable for beginners to think that there is a self that has to be Liberated by following a path consisting of virtuous methods – to think in real cause and effect like taught in the teaching of dependent origination, the Wheel of Life. It is preferable to start with the Hinayana teachings, because of the danger of total rejection of the dharma or failing into nihilism are great. Then it is preferable to teach love, compassion, patience, bodhicitta. Receptivity to a more subtle wisdom will come later. But, of course, a right path has to combine method and wisdom (the two accumulations) all the time, because only the wisdom directly realizing the true nature of reality is the final antidote, and only accumulating enough merit can make this possible.)

.
(-- Assertion: "the four lines of the stanza."

-- If during liberation there is no liberated self, and nirvana which is termed the ultimate is said to be mere ending of conceptions of a self through the non-recurrence of that which is composite, what is the purpose of striving for such an ultimate? It is preferable for those interested in their own good to accept conventionalities like eyes, sprouts and so forth but not to assert any ultimate, for ordinary people have some belief in virtuous and non-virtuous actions, their homes, forests and so forth but none whatsoever in the ultimate.

-- This stanza was written in connection with the extensive refutation of the self in the following chapter. Since it is interpreted as a controversial contention in Candrakirti's commentary, it should not be accepted as our own contention.)

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

.
\ ###
\ Discovering that external (*i.e. world*) and internal (*i.e. mind*) dependently arising Phenomena (*i.e. the five aggregates*) exist in reliance (*i.e. dependently arisen – conventional truths / existence*),
\ and understanding Their emptiness of existence (*i.e. ultimate truth / non-existence*) by way of their own entities,
\ Grow wise in the meaning of THE MIDDLE WAY FREE FROM EXTREMES. (*i.e. Tetralemma - Aiming at the Union of The Two Truths*)
.

(i.e. Trying to stay with the Middle Way using both method and wisdom together: The Union of method and wisdom. The Middle Way: at the same time as we use virtuous methods based on the law of dependent origination (causality) to accumulate merit, we need to gradually develop the wisdom realizing the emptiness of inherent existence of all dharma (including causes, conditions and causality, including dependent origination and all virtuous methods and paths). But that doesn't mean that there is no cause, condition or causality at all, or that we should drop all virtuous paths right now. We need both method and wisdom together all the time, because this is more in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything which is beyond all conceptualization.)

.
\ ###
\ This is the ninth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on the refutation of permanent functional phenomena.
.

This concludes the commentary on the ninth chapter, showing how to meditate on the refutation of permanent functional phenomena, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L2: [Chapter 10 - Refuting Misconceptions of the Self –
There is nothing permanent that is having rebirths, or is being Liberated - P.215]

(i.e. *SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON REFUTING THE SELF.*

-- Individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena: Refuting the self.

-- Refuting various views of a permanent self:

-- Because the self is not real, it is not viewed as the same way by all opponents

-- As a permanent cause:

-- A cause cannot be permanent, thus the self cannot be permanent

-- An intangible self could not be the cause of the movement of tangible things

-- A permanent self/cause and its effects would not depend on other conditions; but that is not what is seen

-- Everything is not entirely existent only in the mind; there is a flow out there

-- Real existent cause and effect, because they cannot exist simultaneously nor be separate, could not explain continuity

-- The permanent self vs. the aggregates: no one, not separate

-- A permanent self cannot be found in the aggregates, or outside of them

-- (The individual self is not identical to the aggregates, it is not different / separate.)

-- A permanent self would not change from one rebirth to another

-- A permanent self could not be matter only

-- A permanent self is not mental either, because mental states changes

-- A permanent consciousness, a knower, would not need the sense organs

-- A permanent self without a consciousness is unimaginable

-- Changing from potential to consciousness would mean not permanent

-- Again a person without consciousness is not imaginable

-- A liberated person without a self ?

-- (There is no self-nature that transmigrate (in the dispositions or aggregates, or out of it))

-- (There is no subtle-self separate from an ego to Liberate. Some very subtle self-nature to purify.)

-- (There is no self bound in samsara, there is no bounding, there is no i, ii, iii; there is no self liberated, no liberation)

-- Something omnipresent does not need to act, thus the self cannot be omnipresent

-- An actionless self, non-functional, is as non-existent

-- The "I" is relative to the subject, it is not an absolute independent functional thing

-- A permanent self would not change, nor be harmed, nor need protection, morality, or seek liberation

-- Concluding that there is no real self

-- It is more useful : (If there is no self, then there is no possessions, and no need to protect or satisfy an "ego". Thus all the defilements have no foundation, we can let go. There is not even a self with no ego (like implicit in self-Liberation). There is no "I" in opposition to "the World". And all the mental constructions based on this assumption are stopped. There is no more acquisition of karma resulting in the five aggregates (from rebirth, or as adaptation within a suppose "life"). There is no more accumulation of knowledge, expectations, views. And there is no more deceptions. It is this release, this stopping of mental constructions (based on self-existence), seeing everything as empty (even a very subtle self), that is Liberation.)

-- The wise does concludes that

-- Liberation would not be attained through lies

-- Impermanence does not necessitate discontinuation :

-- Products which undergo change moment by moment are neither permanent nor do they discontinue.

-- No need of a permanent self, as a support for karma, to explain memory, bondage, continuity, and liberation

-- The flow is from impermanent causes to impermanent effects, without limits on both sides

-- Everything is both cause and effect, both part and composite, everything continually change nothing last even a moment

-- Nothing is permanent in the flow / continuum

-- The illusion of real things, the names, are given by the mind trying to build conceptual models of the flow regularity

-- Avoiding the two extremes:

-- (But this does not mean that there is no self at all: It is not individual self, it is not non-individual self at all. Don't go to the other extreme: nihilism.)
-- origination fights annihilation/nihilism and impermanence/emptiness fight eternity/inherent existence
-- (THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS (Dependent Origination, Emptiness))

L3: [I. Individual refutations of the self]

L4: [A. Refuting the Vaishesika self]

L5: [1. Refuting the nature of the self]

L6: [a. Actual meaning]

.
\ ###
\ 226.
\ When the inner self is not
\ Female, male or neuter,
\ It is only out of ignorance
\ That you think your own self male.

.
(i.e. There is no inherently existing self with its own permanent attributes defining it. Gender cannot be an essential attribute of the permanent inner self since it can change with rebirths. The basis for the attributes cannot be found in the whole. All attributes that would define a permanent self are like that, they change, they are impermanent. So they cannot be used to prove the existence of an inherently existing self.)

.
-- i.e. To maintain the need for morality with ordinary people who do not understand the true meaning of emptiness, some feel that there is a need to teach about a self, although very subtle, that could be liberated, and about a self that goes through rebirths. Otherwise they would think there is nothing after death, that they could escape the consequences of their actions through death, or that liberation is like annihilation of their own self. So, let's try to find this self.

.
(First the self asserted by the Vaishesikas. First it is shown that gender, which differs from one life to the next, is incompatible with the idea of a permanent self.

-- Male, female, neuter are not absolute attribute of a permanent self.

-- If the so-called self existed by way of its own entity, [it should be seen in the state of nirvana.] Fearing its discontinuation because it is not seen during nirvana, they say, "The conventional is preferable," and so forth. However the self does not exist by way of its own entity for if it did, it should be male, female or neuter, but that is inappropriate. The Followers assert two selves, an inner and an outer self. The first is inside the body, and this inner agent which makes the various sense organs engage with objects is the focus of the conception "I" The second is a combination of the body and sense organs which assists the first.

It follows that the inner self does not exist by way of its own entity. If it did a woman should in the future lives too only ever be a woman, yet change is observed. Femaleness and so forth are also not attributes of the self. Thus it follows that the inner agential person does not exist by way of its own entity, for when the inner self is neither female, male or neuter, it is just out of ignorant confusion that you imagine your own self male. It is a fabrication like mistaking a mottled rope for a snake. Sutra says:

~ An attitude of doubt fomented poison,
~ And though it has not entered one, one faints)

.
L6: [b. Refuting the rejoinder]

.
\ ###
\ 227.
\ When all the elements are not
\ Male, female or neuter,
\ How is that which depends on them
\ Male, female or neuter?

.
(i.e. And those attributes do not come with the parts: The basis for the attribute cannot be found in the parts. Gender cannot be an attribute of the outer self either since we cannot find it in the parts; gender is merely an imputation, a conventional name. All attributes that would be used to define an inherently existing self are like that.)

(If you try to find this "female state", as the goddess did in the Vimalakirti Sutra, you will not find it. It is merely a name attributed, by convention, to some basis. So the self is not "essentially by nature" male, or female, or neuter.

-- Assertion: Male gender, female gender and so forth are marks of the outer self. Through its connection with this the inner self is male and so forth.

-- Answer: It follows that because of their connection with the outer self, the four great elements would also be a male self and so forth. If that were so, all the elements would be the person, since for truly existent functional things there can be no differences between what is and is not male and so forth.

-- When all the elements do not have male, female or neuter gender, how can the inner self which relies upon the outer self -- those elements -- feasibly be male, female or neuter? It cannot. If all the elements were male, female or neuter, it would follow that even during the early stages of the fetus, maleness and so forth should be observable.

-- Objection: The same error is entailed for you.

-- Answer: Since we impute gender in dependence upon elements which lack inherent existence, there is no error.)

L6: [c. [Unwanted] conclusion that generating the thought "I" when observing another's self is reasonable]

###

228.

Your self is not my self and thus there is

No such self, since it is not ascertained.

Does the conception not arise

In relation to impermanent things?

(i.e. The term "I" is relative: The "I" is relative to the subject, it is not an absolute external functional thing. It is merely an imputation of the mind, a convention, a concept.)

(Sort of like: the perception of the "self" of someone is relative. It depends on the subject and on many other factors. It is a creation of the mind, an imputation on a valid base. If the "I" was an absolute functional thing everybody would see it as such, the "I", independently of who is looking. But, as we all know, the "I" is relative to the person looking. Exactly like right and left is relative to the position of the subject.

-- It follows that the personal self is not established by way of its own entity. If it were, just as the thought "blue" arises universally in relation to blue, the thought "I" should arise in Yajna when he observes Devadatta's self, but it does not.

-- Since that which is your self is not my own self, it follows that the object of your conception of "I" is not a self existing by way of its own entity, because it is not ascertained as the object of my conception of "I" or my attachment to the self. Therefore doesn't the thought "I" arise in relation to impermanent things called form and so forth? The self is only imputed.)

L5: [2. Refuting the proofs]

L6: [a. Refuting that a permanent self is the cause of entering and leaving cyclic existence]

###

229.

From one rebirth to another

The person changes like the body.

It is illogical for yours to be

Separate from the body and permanent.

(i.e. No permanent self: Since a person change from one rebirth to another, there is nothing permanent. We cannot find a self that would be separated from the aggregates.)

-- Assertion: The self is permanent because of being the one that enters and leaves cyclic existence. If there were no self, who would be in cyclic existence because of accumulation actions? Who would gain freedom from cyclic existence? Thus the self exists.

-- Answer: It follows that it is illogical for the self you assert to be permanent and a separate entity from the body, because the person, like the body, changes from one rebirth as a god, human and so forth to another.)

L6: [b. Refuting it as the activator of the body]

L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

\ ###
\ 230.
\ Intangible things do not
\ Produce so-called motility.
\ Thus the life force is not
\ Agent of the body's movements.

.
(i.e. No intangible self: An intangible inner self would not be able to create physical movement, just like a permanent self would not produce impermanent effect.)

.
(How could an inner permanent self, which would be intangible because not part of the body, have influence on the body. This is like the problem of the interaction between mind and matter in western philosophy. It has never been seen that an intangible could cause an effect on a tangible. So this inner self cannot exist and be the "driver" of your actions. This is like the fact that a permanent cause cannot create an impermanent effect as mentioned in chapter 9.

-- Nor can a permanent intangible self act as agent of the body's movement, as is claimed, since only something tangible can cause motion.

-- Assertion: Without a self there would be no physical movements such as stretching or flexing because the body would lack an activator. Thus an inner agential person exists who activates the body just as Devadatta drives his chariot.

-- Answer: That is illogical. It follows that your life force or self is not the instigator of physical movement because the self is not tangible.

-- It is so because, just as a chariot can only be moved by something tangible and not by anything intangible, an intangible functional thing cannot actually move that which has form from one place to another. Though Vaisesikas assert that the self has form, they do not accept that it has external tangibility and so forth.)

.
L7: [(2) Showing what invalidated [belief in] a permanent self]

.
\ ###
\ 231.
\ Why [teach] non-violence and wonder about
\ Conditions for a permanent self?
\ A diamond never has to be
\ Protected against woodworm.

.
(i.e. A permanent self would not need morality: On the contrary, it is the thought of a permanent self that would eliminate the need for morality.)

.
(-- A permanent self would be invulnerable to harm of any kind and would therefore not need to seek spiritual practices as a means of protection.

-- It follows that if the self is permanent, it is contradictory to teach non-violence as a practice to protect it from dangers such as a bad rebirth or to wonder what conditions are not unfavorable to it, because nothing can harm a permanent functional thing, just as a diamond which is not in danger of harm is never protected against woodworms, nor does it need to be.)

.
L6: [c. Refuting proof of a permanent self]

L7: [(1) Seeing memory of past rebirths is unsuitable as proof of a permanent self]

.
\ ###
\ 232.
\ If your self is permanent
\ Because of remembering other lives,
\ How can your body be impermanent
\ When you see a scar previously formed?

.
(i.e. There is no need for a permanent self to explain continuity / memory of past rebirths: There is no need for a permanent memory holder -- a permanent holder of karma seeds. There is no need for inherently existing causes and effects to explain interdependence, to support dependent origination. On the contrary, one would not exist without the other; dependent origination and emptiness implies each other. The continuum permits the uninterrupted flow of influences / information / cause & effect, without assuming inherently existing causes and effects.)

.
(-- Nor does memory of past lives establish the self as permanent, but demonstrates the presence of a continuum of consciousness, consisting of moments which arise in dependence upon each other.

-- Assertion: The self is permanent because there is memory of previous rebirths. Memory of other lives is not feasible for a composite thing whose nature is to disintegrate as soon as it is produced.

-- Answer: You may consider the self permanent because there is memory of past lives, like thinking, "I was human in my last rebirth." Then how could your body be impermanent? It should be permanent because in a past life you saw the scar of a wound inflicted on the body and now, when you see a birthmark which resembles that previously inflicted wound, you say, "That is the scar of the wound inflicted in the past." According to us the object of the thought "I" is co-extensive with both the past and of this life. Since it is merely imputed, memory of past rebirths is feasible.

There is a bowl of curd in a house. The footprint of a pale-colored pigeon perched on the thick thatch is visible on it, even though its foot has not touched the curd and so forth. Similarly, all actions and agents are feasible for that which arises dependently.)

.
L7: [(2) Unfeasibility of mindless matter remembering past rebirths]

.
\ ###
\ 233.
\ If the self when possessing that
\ Which has mind is a knower,
\ By that [same argument] that which has mind would be
\ Mindless and the person permanent.

.
(i.e. The self is not different, nor the same as karma / memories: On the contrary, the simple fact that it can accumulate memory makes this self impermanent. This self cannot be separated from the mind, nor can it be the same as the mind – next verse.)

.
(-- If, as claimed, the person were mindless matter only capable of memory through an association with consciousness, then the person could not be permanent and unchanging, since it would first lack and then possess the faculty of remembering

-- It follows that the self cannot remember past rebirths because it is asserted as mindless matter. It is also unreasonable to assert that it remembers past lives by virtue of having mind, because by first lacking memory and later possessing memory, it has given up its entity.

-- If the self, despite being matter, is a knower of the past because of possessing that which has mind, by that [same argument] the attribute, that which has mind, should be mindless and matter because of possessing a self which is classified as matter. It follows that the self is also not permanent because first it does not remember but later newly develops memory of past lives.)

.
L7: [(3) Entailment of permanence, if that which has attributes such as intelligence remembers past rebirths]

.
\ ###
\ 234.
\ A life force which has pleasure and so forth
\ Appears as various as pleasure and so forth.
\ Thus like pleasure it is not
\ Suitable as something permanent.

.
(i.e. The self is not different, nor the same as the five aggregates: The simple fact that it can change makes it impermanent.)

.
(-- Moreover something which at different times has different attributes, such as pleasure and pain, cannot be permanent either.

-- If the life force or self has mind because of having attributes like intelligence, then because of having attributes like pleasure and pain, it should appear as different as pleasure and so forth while experiencing satisfaction and affliction. Thus like pleasure and so forth it cannot be permanent either.)

L4: [B. Refuting the self imputed by Samkhyas]

L5: [1. Unacceptability of asserting a permanent conscious person]

.
 \ ###
 \ 235.
 \ If consciousness is permanent
 \ An agent is superfluous.
 \ if fire is permanent
 \ Fuel is unnecessary.
 .

(i.e. Consciousness and its object are not two, not one – so there is no permanent consciousness: A permanent consciousness, a knower, would not need the sense organs, nor the object of which it is conscious ... On the contrary consciousness is dependent on the sense organs, and to be conscious has to be conscious of something ... Those two are interdependent, two concepts co-dependently arisen.)

.
 (-- The Samkhya assertion that a permanent conscious person exists is then examined and its flaws are revealed. What role would the eyes and other senses play, if such a continually conscious person existed?
 -- Samkhya assertion: If the self is asserted as matter these inconsistencies apply, but since, according to us, the person's nature is to be conscious, there is not the least unwanted entailment.
 -- Answer: Samkhyas define twenty-five categories of phenomena of which twenty-two are matter and the twenty-fifth is asserted as the knower, person and self . They assert that the person experiences objects which the intellect makes it crave. This is explained extensively elsewhere.
 -- If the conscious person is asserted as permanent, it follows that agents such as the eyes and so forth which permit experience of objects are superfluous and useless because the person that experiences objects exists as a permanent functional thing. Fuel is needed to make a fire but if fire is permanent, fuel is unnecessary.)
 .

L5: [2. Entailment that [the activity of experiencing] cannot stop until
 the conscious person, the substance, has disintegrated]

.
 \ ###
 \ 236.
 \ A substantial entity, unlike an action,
 \ Does not alter until it disintegrates.
 \ Thus it is improper to claim
 \ The person exists but consciousness does not.
 .

(i.e. Consciousness and the activity of being conscious are not two, not one: There is no consciousness without the activity of being conscious of something. So there is no consciousness that exist and then become conscious of something; like there is no doer without the action of doing. Those two are interdependent, two concepts co-dependently arisen. So there is no permanent consciousness.)

.
 (Maybe like in "the doer does" the subject and the action are not one, neither separate. Here, the self and the activity of being conscious cannot be thought as separated independent entity, nor as the same. Consciousness is not something added to a permanent self.
 -- Assertion: The person whose nature is potential consciousness is the experiencer of objects and being conscious is the activity of experiencing. Since this depends on agents like the eye, there is no flaw.
 -- Answer: Movement does not occur unless, for instance, a tree is agitated by the wind, but those fallacies would entail movement until the substantial entity disintegrates. The phenomenon of activity depends on the substantial entity and its motion.
 -- The activity of moving depends on the substantial entity and may cease even though the substantial entity has not disintegrated. The nature of the substantial entity does not likewise change between its production and its disintegration. By contrast, consciousness and the person are an indifferentiable permanent entity. Thus it is improper to claim that the person but not consciousness exists prior to experiencing an object.)
 .

L5: [3. Unacceptability of asserting that the person's nature [changes] from
 actual consciousness first to potential consciousness]

.
 \ ###

\ 237.
\ At times one sees potential consciousness,
\ At others consciousness itself.
\ Because of being like molten iron
\ The person undergoes change.

(i.e. The simple fact that it becomes conscious of something proves that it is impermanent. All functional phenomenon are impermanent as stated before; they are both cause and effect.)

(-- If the person is claimed to be potentially conscious, the self and consciousness could not be a permanent indifferentiable entity, for then the person but no consciousness would exist before an object is experienced. Any transition from the potential consciousness to actual consciousness indicates that the person is not permanent.
-- Assertion: Although there is no consciousness prior to experiencing objects, its potential and thus the person exists.
-- Answer: On occasions other than when objects are being experienced one sees potential consciousness, and when objects are being experienced, consciousness itself. In that case, like molten iron which later becomes a solid mass, former potential consciousness later becomes actual consciousness. It therefore follows that the person undergoes change because consciousness and the person are accepted as one entity.)

L4: [C. Refuting the self imputed by Naiyayikas]

L5: [1. Refuting that a part of the self possessing a mere particle of mind perceives objects]

\ ###
\ 238.
\ Merely [a small part with] mind is conscious
\ But the person is as vast as space.
\ Therefore it would seem as though
\ Its nature is not to be conscious.

(-- The Naiyayika assertion that there is a vast permanent partless self which is present in each being is next shown to be illogical, for then that which is one person's self should also be another's.
-- Naiyayika assertion: Our person is not a conscious entity. Since a part of the self the mere size of a particle has mind, there is consciousness of objects. It depends on just this part with mind. A person that is conscious and not separate from mind is produced through this association. The person is permanent and very extensive like space.
-- Answer: Since except for a part as small as a particle the rest of this permanent and extensive self is not associated with consciousness, that self's nature does not seem to have consciousness of objects. Just as it cannot be said that water of the Ganges is salty because of contact with a grain of salt, it is inappropriate to assert that which is not conscious as the person.)

L5: [2. Refuting belief in a permanent omnipresent self]

\ ###
\ 239.
\ If the self is in everyone then why
\ Does another not think of this one as "I"?
\ It is unacceptable to say that
\ It is obscured by itself.

(-- If there is a partless permanent self which is omnipresent like space and in each individual sentient being, why would another person not think "I" in relation to my own self? It follows that they should think of it as "I" because the two selves are one. It cannot be omnipresent if the object of someone else's conception of the self is not my own self.
-- Assertion: It is not perceived because it has been obscured by the other's self.
-- Answer: It is unacceptable to say that the self obscures itself for there is no duality of that which obscures and that which is obscured.)

L4: [D. Explaining other refutation like that of the attributes and so forth]

L5: [1. Asserting that though the principal is matter it is the creator of everything amounts to madness]

\ ###

\ 240.
\ There is no difference between
\ The insane and those from whom
\ The attributes are the creator
\ But are never conscious.

(-- This is followed by an examination of the Samkhya belief that the creative force is unconscious matter with the capacity to produce virtue and non-virtue but with no capacity to experience their effects.

-- Samkhya assertion: The great one, a synonym for the intellect, evolves from the principal which is matter and a balance of pleasure, pain and equanimity. The three I-principles evolve from the great one. Eleven faculties evolve from the I-principle associated with lightness: five mental faculties for action and the speculative faculty. From the I-principle associated with motility come the five mere objects from which the five elements evolve. The I-principle of darkness acts as the basis for the other to I-principles.

-- Answer: It follows that it is contradictory to assert, as do the Samkhyas, that the principal which is a balance of the three attributes is the creator of all manifestations but is never conscious. There is not the least difference between those who assert the like and the insane whose perception is distorted.)

L5: [2. Contradiction of asserting that it creates virtue and
non-virtue but does not experience their maturation]

\ ###
\ 241.
\ What is more illogical
\ Than that the attributes should always
\ Know how to construct homes and so forth
\ But not know how to experience them?

(-- Since such a contention contradicts reason and conflicts with worldly convention, it is utterly incorrect. What is more illogical than to claim that the attributes whose nature is pleasure, pain and equanimity know how to construct homes and so forth but do not know how to experience these amenities? It contradicts both reason and convention.)

L5: [3. Refuting that a permanent self is the agent of actions and experiencer of their maturation]

\ ###
\ 242.
\ The active is not permanent.
\ (*i.e. A cause cannot be permanent, thus the self cannot be permanent*)
\ The ubiquitous is actionless.
\ (*i.e. Something omnipresent does not need to act, thus the self cannot be omnipresent*)
\ The actionless is like the non-existent.
\ (*i.e. An actionless self, non-functional, is as non-existent*)
\ Why do you not prefer selflessness?
\ (*i.e. Conclude that there is no real self; it is more useful*)

(-- On the other hand if, as the Vaisesikas claim, the self is the doer of actions and experiencer of their results, how can it be permanent, for this necessarily entails transformation from a previous state to a subsequent one.

-- Vaisesika assertion: The self alone is the doer of actions and the experiencer of their maturation.

-- Answer ab: If that is so, the self cannot be permanent.

-- If the self is an agent it must be accepted as causing action. If it does not perform actions it is unsuitable as an agent. That which performs actions like coming and going is not permanent since one must admit that it differs from before. Something the whole of which is everywhere all the time does not perform activities such as coming and going since there is no place or time it does not occupy.

-- Assertion: Well then, an actionless self exist.

-- Answer cd: Since an actionless self is as non-existent as a sky flower, why do you not prefer selflessness? It is worth doing so, for understanding it frees one from all fears.)

L3: [II. General refutation]

L4: [A. Erroneousness of thinking a personal self exist]

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\ ###
\ 243.
\ Some see it as ubiquitous and for some
\ The person is the mere [size of the] body.
\ Some see it as a mere particle.
\ The wise see it as non-existent.

(i.e. There is no inherently existing self. Since it doesn't exist those who assert its existence cannot agree among themselves.)

(-- It follows that the conception of a personal self is erroneous. Since the self, if it existed, would do so by way of its own entity, it should appear without differences.

-- Some such as Vaishesikas and Samkhyas see the self as existing in each body and as being ubiquitous like space. Others such as Nirgranthas see that which has a body as proportionate to the size of that body, such as an ant's or an elephant's.

Nirgranthas assert the life force is large or small like the size of the body.

Others, unable to accept this, see it as a mere particle.

Those with the wisdom that perceives the suchness of functional things without distortion see the self as non-existent.

Indeed, if the self existed by way of its own entity, the Forders' view would not differ.)

L4: [B. Impossibility of liberation from cyclic existence for a permanent self]

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\ ###
\ 244.
\ How can what is permanent be harmed,
\ Or the unharmed be liberated?
\ Liberation is irrelevant
\ For one whose self is permanent.

(i.e. A permanent self would not seek protection and liberation. The path would be useless for a permanent self.)

(-- A permanent self would be invulnerable to suffering of cyclic existence and would therefore not need to seek release.

-- For an opponent who asserts a permanent self, attaining liberation is irrelevant. How can that which is permanent be harmed by dangers and so forth in cyclic existence, and how can that which is unharmed in cyclic existence be liberated by subsequent mediation on the paths? It cannot for these very reasons.)

L4: [C. Inappropriateness of asserting the existence of a self during liberation]

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\ ###
\ 245.
\ If the self exists it is inappropriate
\ To think there is no self
\ And false to claim one attains nirvana
\ Through certain knowledge of reality.

(i.e. There is no individual Liberation – no self in Nirvana: To say that a permanent self is liberated by abandoning the belief in a self is contradictory. There is no self being liberated, or attaining Nirvana.)

(-- Moreover, if the self were truly existent, how could giving up conceptions of a self be the means to attain liberation, as is claimed?

-- If the self exists by way of its own entity, it follows that thinking there is no self is inappropriate and that attainment of liberation is not feasible, since the basis for conceptions of a self is intact. Moreover the contention of these amazing people [who assert that the self exists but claim] that though ascertaining knowledge of suchness one abandons conceptions of a self and thereby attains nirvana would be false. Therefore those who seek liberation should accept

selflessness.)

L4: [D. Refuting a substantially established liberated [person] without a self]

.\ ###
.\ 246.
.\ If it exists at liberation
.\ It should not be non-existent before.
.\ It is explained that what is seen
.\ Without anything is its nature.

(i.e. Nothing permanent heving rebirths – no self in samsara: And if there is no individual liberation there is also no real individuality taking rebirths in samsara.)

-- Fearing the absurd consequence that conceptions of a self would occur in the liberated state if the self exists, one might assert that though there is no self, there is a truly existent liberated person.

-- It follows that there must be such a truly existent liberated person previously too during cyclic existence, because its entity, isolated from any associated factors, as perceived by unmistaken awareness, is said to be its nature. If there is no self during liberation, it should not be asserted as existing during the cycle of rebirths either.)

L3: [III. Eliminating any fault of annihilation with regard to selflessness]

L4: [A. Although there is no self, there is no danger of the composite and transitory discontinuing]

.\ ###
.\ 247.
.\ If the impermanent discontinues
.\ How could there be grass at present?
.\ If, indeed, this were true,
.\ No one would have ignorance either.

(i.e. No-self doesn't mean no possible continuity of karma or Liberation: There is no need for a permanent self, to support karma and rebirth, to explain bondage and continuity, and the possibility of Liberation. There is a flow of interdependence without any inherently existing entities in it. There is continuity in the endless chain of causes and effects without the need to postulate any inherently existing cause or effect. – This is the same as saying that emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination, or that the Two Truths are not contradictory, but inseparable...)

(Nothing has origination, duration, cessation; nothing is impermanent; this model would not explain continuity and bounding; there is just the flow without anything inherently existent in it. Reality should not be seen as real impermanent things changing from one moment to another through discrete steps. Nothing really originate or discontinue. There is no real cause and effect. Just the continuum. The model consisting of "moments" (ksana) is not consistent, it cannot explain continuity, nor the dependence in samsara. See Karikas 19-21. There is no need for permanence to have continuity, and the illusion of duration; on the contrary, permanent cause and effect would inhibit any change. Bondage is explained with the continuous flow of cause & effect, without the necessity for a permanent self to be the holder of karma.

-- All these views are based on a failure to understand that impermanence does not necessitate discontinuation. Nothing impermanent can be produced from a permanent cause. Therefore a permanent self is not feasible as an initiating cause of activity. Products which undergo change moment by moment are neither permanent nor do they discontinue. This become clear when we correctly understand the nature of dependent arising, for though the cause ceases an effect has arisen from it and thus there is continuity.

-- Assertion: if there is no self, composite things whose nature is to disintegrate moment by moment would discontinue because of disintegration as soon as they are produced.

-- Answer: Understanding impermanence to mean discontinuation is unacceptable. If it did, how could there today be fields and grass whose continuity is beginningless? There should not be any, for if impermanence meant discontinuation, then whatever is impermanent would have the defect of discontinuing. If the view that whatever is impermanent discontinues were true, it follows that no one would have ignorance because it is impermanent. It also follows that pleasure and desire would not occur either.)

L4: [B. Even if a self exists, it is unsuitable as the cause that starts and stops [production]]

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 248.
\
 Even if the self exists
\
 Form is seen to arise from other [causes],
\
 To continue by virtue of others
\
 And to disintegrate through others.

.
(i.e. The self is not a primary cause: As we have seen in the previous chapter, a permanent cause cannot explain the effect. The effect is always dependent on an infinity of other causes and conditions, never on only one absolute cause. This cause would itself need to be triggered and stopped. So the self should not be seen as a permanent cause, independent of any other causes and conditions.)

.
(If the self is a permanent cause, all its effects should not be also dependent on other causes and conditions. But that is not what is seen. The self is not a primary permanent absolute cause of everything that is attributed to it. Another way to see this: Seems to point to the fact that "it is not completely mind fabrications"; there are other causes and conditions beside the mind; things are not "non-existent" at all. There is a flow out there, although the chunks are created by our own mind.

-- It follows that even if the self exists, it is not acceptable as the initiating cause of things which are seen to arise exclusively from other causes. Fire arises from the contact between sunlight and a fire-crystal, water from the contact between moonlight and a water-crystal, the sprout from the seed, and forms such as the sense organs from an earlier stage of the fetus. They continue because of other factors: fire keeps burning because of fuel and so forth and just as it does not burn when there is insufficient fuel, they disintegrate through other factors. The self cannot exist for if it did, it alone should produce all effects.)

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L4: [C. Producers and that which is produced exist in relation only to impermanent things]

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 249.
\
 Just as the sprout which is a product
\
 Is produced from a product, the seed,
\
 Similarly all that is impermanent
\
 Comes from the impermanent.

.
(i.e. No permanent self, just an endless chain of interdependence / karma: The actual self is an impermanent self that is the result of an endless chain of causes and effects. The five aggregates produce karma; karma conditions the production of the next five aggregates; and both are interdependent endlessly, until one can transcend the whole cycle by seeing through its real nature. There is no need for a permanent self here; there has never been any permanent self; there is no self Liberation.)

.
(-- An effect cannot arise from something permanent and thus, just as the sprout, a product, arises from the seed which is a product, all that is impermanent comes from impermanent causes. Therefore composite things, undergoing production and disintegration moment by moment, can never be permanent nor discontinue. The thunderbolts of permanence and annihilation which strike and destroy the relationship of cause and effect between composite things are driven off to a distance by the wise with the mantra of dependent arising.)

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L4: [D. Showing briefly how permanence and annihilation are avoided in terms of the conventional]

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 250.
\
 SINCE FUNCTIONAL THINGS ARISE
\
 THERE IS NO DISCONTINUATION
\
 AND BECAUSE THEY CEASE
\
 THERE IS NO PERMANENCE.

.
(i.e. The Two Truths: dependent origination and emptiness, or karma and no-self. We need both method and wisdom together (the two accumulations) to stay away from all extremes. Dependent origination or karma is the antidote to

nihilism or discontinuity, and emptiness or no-self is the antidote to inherent existence or permanence. Merit is accumulated using methods based on dependent origination, the explanation of the Wheel of Life, the law of karma ... Wisdom is accumulated by gradually combining the realization of the emptiness of inherent existence of all dharmas (including the self) with the various methods until we can transcend it all. Dependent origination and emptiness (or karma and no-self) do not contradict each other; one implies the other.)

.
(-- Since resultant things like sprouts arise and are produced, the cause's continuum is not in danger of being annihilated. Since the seed ceases once the sprout has been produced, the cause is not in danger of being permanent. The "Fundamental [Treatise Called] Wisdom" says:
~ Whatever has arisen depending on something
~ Is firstly not [one with] it
and so forth. In brief this shows how permanence and annihilation are avoided in relation to the conventional.)
.

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

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\ ###
\ Through familiarity with meditating on
\ The impermanence, suffering and uncleanness of cyclic existence,
\ Abandon the limitless views of the self,
\ Both innate and those imputed by tenets.
.
\ ###
\ This is the tenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on refuting the self.
.

This concludes the commentary on the tenth chapter, showing how to meditate on refuting the self, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".
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L2: [Chapter 11 - Refuting Truly Existent Time – There is no truly existing absolute time, duration or impermanence - P.227]

(i.e. *SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON REFUTING TIME.*

Individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena: Refuting truly existent time.

- Refuting time as a truly existent functional thing / that past, present and future things are all existent (now)
 - If the future and the past exist now, they are not past and future.
 - If the past and present continue to exist, the future already exist, the present permanent, then nothing really originate or ceased, nothing is impermanent, nothing is produced through causality -- but that is not what is seen.
 - If the future already exist, is there another production?
 - If the future already exist, there is no need to work on it.
 - Directly seeing the future, or past lives: bull-...
 - On the other hand: past, present, future, they are not non-existent at all either; otherwise there would be no causality at all, no bounding, and no possibility for liberation.
 - Avoiding both extremes: it is not existing, nor non-existing. In both case morality would be useless.
 - Actual change, production, origination or cessation, ... is not seen. So there is no clear present.
 - Nothing last the same even a moment; everything is continually changing. Nothing last long enough to "be existent". So nothing could be used as an objective absolute time comparator.
 - Time, duration, is not directly perceptible; so it is not a true functional thing.
 - Time and duration: not two separate thing, nor either one. One cannot be used to prove the other.
 - Impermanence and things: not separate, not one. In both case there would be no duration possible. So they cannot be used to prove duration, or time.
 - The unclear opposition of two characteristics of things: impermanence and duration
 - Past, present and future: they are not the same, they are not different / separate real existent entities, they are dependent on each other, they are fabrications of the mind because the mind does not understand how continuity really works
 - Not knowing how to posit continuity and transitoriness, They say time is permanent and the three times exist substantially.
- .
-- see also
-- Chapter 9 verses: 107- About Refuting permanent time
-- even time, like seasons, is dependent, an effect, thus not an absolute permanent cause
-- because there is no cause without having causes and conditions itself
-- the cause itself change from being non active, to being active, depending on other conditions, thus it is not permanent
-- If a permanent cause cannot be the real cause, then there would be no cause at all.
-- how can permanence cause impermanence?)

L3: [I. Refuting that time is substantially established by nature]

L4: [A. Refuting the past and the future]

L5: [1. Refuting a substantially established future]

L6: [a. Showing the fallacies if the future is truly existent]

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\ ###
\ 251.
\ The present pot and the past one
\ Do not exist in the future pot.
\ Since both would be future,
\ The future would not exist.

(i.e. *Past, present and future cannot exist simultaneously – like cause and effect cannot exist simultaneously: Some think time is a primary cause, without being an effect – like with the seasons. Permanent time would mean that the past and present would still exist in the future – or that the future exist in the present. But, the causes, past and present, are not the same as the effect, future, otherwise there would be no need for production of the future. They are not different or consecutive either, otherwise there would be no continuity or causality.*)

(-- Assertion by Vaidantikas and other proponents of permanent time: Though it is correct to admit a permanent self

does not exist since it is not established by either direct or inferential cognition, permanent functional things are not non-existent since there is permanent time. Though water, manure, seeds and so forth are present, one observes that sprout, flowers and the like are not produced at certain times but are produced at others. From this one can infer the presence of another cause which is time. Though it is a permanent entity different from the functional things which exist in the three times, it is revealed in terms of instants, moments, brief spans, and so forth.

-- Answer: This is unacceptable, for if time were an entity different from functional things it should be perceived but it is not perceived. That has already been refuted. In this context the refutation is made taking a future pot to represent future time. The same should be understood with respect to the other two times.

-- It follows that the present pot does not exist in the future pot, nor does the past pot exist at that time, for if they both existed at that time, time would be disrupted, since things which are to occur later would already exist at an earlier time. Also at any one time another cannot exist. For these reasons, since both the past and present would be future if they existed at the time of the future pot, they do not already exist at that time. If the future of the future existed by way of its own entity, it should be future. In that case since all three times would have to be future, there could not be any past or present. If that were so, the future itself would not exist, since it could not be posited as future in relation to anything.)

L6: [b. Refuting the rejoinder]

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 \ ###
 \ 252.
 \ If a disintegrated thing exists as
 \ A future entity in the future,
 \ How can what is future in nature
 \ Become that which is past?

(i.e. No permanent future: The future becomes the present and then the past. So there is no permanent future, no inherently existing future.)

(-- Assertion: The past pot is not altogether non-existent in the future pot. Since there is a part of it which has not yet come into existence as an entity that has occurred, there is no error.

-- Answer: If at the time of the future pot, the disintegrated pot existed in the future as an entity which had not yet come into existence, it would follow that the pot was future because of being, by way of its own entity, that which had not yet occurred at the time of the future pot. If this is accepted, it follows that there would be no past. This would necessarily be so, for how could anything that truly existed as future in nature become past? It is contradictory. Moreover by virtue of this reasoning, if the future relation to the pot is asserted as truly existent it must be accepted as being only future, which undermines the contention.)

L6: [c. Consequence that it is present if substantially established]

.
 \ ###
 \ 253.
 \ Because of being future in nature
 \ A future functional thing
 \ Is thus present
 \ And cannot be future.

(i.e. A truly existing future would not be the future: If the future is truly existing, it exist now, and is not the future. So there is no truly existent future.)

(If, according to proponents of permanent time, future things exist, it follows that the future pot is present because of already being in the nature of a future substantially existent thing. If something exists as a substantially established entity, it must be present since it has been produced and has not disintegrated. If this is accepted, it follows that it cannot be future.)

L6: [d. Consequence that impermanence is impossible if all three times are substantially existent]

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 \ ###
 \ 254.

\ If the future, past and present exist,
\ What does not exist?
\ How can there be impermanence
\ For one for whom all times exist?

.
(i.e. Truly existing past, present and future would mean nothing is impermanent: If the past continue to exist, the future already exist, as the present, then nothing originate or disintegrate, nothing is impermanent. Thus the three times cannot truly exist, be permanent.)

.
(-- If it were truly existent, things could undergo no change and there would be nothing impermanent.
-- If, as asserted by Vaisesikas, Vaibhasikas and so forth, things existent by way of their own character exist in the future, exist in the past and exist in the present, what part of a thing could ever not exist? How could there be impermanence for a proponent of substantially existent time? It follows that there cannot be any impermanent things, for if all three times are substantially existent, whatever exist at an earlier time must be accepted as existing later and whatever exists at a later time must be accepted as existing earlier.)

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L5: [2. Refuting a substantially established past]

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\ ###
\ 255.
\ If it has passed beyond the past
\ Why is it the past?
\ If it has not passed beyond the past
\ Why is it the past?

.
(i.e. A truly existing past would not be the past: If the past exist, it exist now, and is not the past. Thus the past is not a real existing functional independent thing.)

.
(-- The future is not substantially existent since future time cannot exist in the future. Similarly has the past passed beyond its own nature as the past or not?
-- In the first case, why is it the past? It follows that it is not the past because of having passed beyond and gone from the past [just as curd which is no longer milk cannot be called milk and a youth who has left childhood behind cannot be called a child.] In the second case, for what reason is it the past? It follows that it is not the past for it has not passed beyond being a past substantial entity but continues to exist as a substantial entity performing a function.)

.
L5: [3. Detailed refutation of the future]

L6: [a. Refuting the assertion of Vaibhasikas and so forth]

L7: [(1) Refutation by examining whether the future is produced or unproduced]

L8: [(a) Actual meaning]

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\ ###
\ 256.
\ If the future is produced
\ Why is it not present?
\ If it is unproduced
\ Is the future permanent or what?

.
(i.e. The future cannot be truly existing, permanent, because we cannot see it.)

.
(-- Regarding Vaibhasikas and so forth who assert that there is a common locus of a pot and the future:
-- If a produced future pot exists, why is it not present? It follows that it should be, because it has been produced and has not ceased. If it is not produced, is the future pot permanent or what? It follows that it should be permanent because of being an unproduced thing.)

.
L8: [(b) Refuting the rejoinder]

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\ ###
\ 257.

\ If the future is impermanent because
\ Though not produced it disintegrates,
\ Since the past does not disintegrate
\ Why not consider it permanent?

.
(i.e. If one assume future is impermanent because it becomes present, then past would be permanent because it doesn't become present or future? See next verse ...)

.
(-- Assertion: Although the future is unproduced, causes and conditions make it become the present, thus it is not permanent.

-- Answer: If even the future is not produced, the future pot is impermanent because it subsequently disintegrates [in that it undergoes change], why not consider that past pot permanent since it does not disintegrate? It follows that it is permanent because of being a thing which does not disintegrate.)

.
L7: [(2) Consequence that impermanence is impossible if the two times are substantially established]

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\ ###
\ 258.
\ If the past and present
\ Are not impermanent,
\ The third which is different
\ From these is also not.

.
(i.e. But, if the past, and present, are permanent, so is the future. Thus nothing would be impermanent, and there would be no need for time; which is absurd.)

.
(-- Alternatively, what is impermanent according to you?

-- The past and present are not impermanent because the past cannot disintegrate, If the present is impermanent by way of its own entity, through its subsequent connection with disintegration it follows that disintegration, too, is impermanent [or that the present is permanent because of its connection with disintegration which is permanent.] Since the third which is different from both the past and present, namely the future, also is not impermanent, there is nothing impermanent for proponents of inherently existing things. Thus it is inappropriate for them to assert the existence of time.)

.
L7: [(3) Showing that the existence of future functional things is absurd]

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\ ###
\ 259.
\ If a thing which will be produced
\ later exists beforehand,
\ The contention of Niyativadins
\ Is not erroneous.

.
(i.e. If the future is inherently existing, nothing is produced through causality. But that is not what we observe.)

.
(-- Assertion: Future things exist because they are produced later when the conditions obtain. That which is previously non-existent, like a barren woman's child, will not be produced later.

-- Answer: If a thing to be produced later is substantially existent prior to its production, the contention that things are inherently established as causeless held by Niyativadins and those asserting that things are not created by peoples' activity and are without cause is not erroneous. Yet their assertion are wrong for they contradict everything that is both seen and unseen.)

.
L7: [(4) Consequence that things already produced are produced again]

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\ ###
\ 260.
\ To say something which will be made to occur
\ Already exists is unreasonable.

\ If that which exists is produced,
\ What has been produced will arise again.

.
(i.e. If the future exist, now, then is there another production?)

.
(-- Moreover even if the future were substantially existent, it would be unreasonable to say that a thing which will be made to occur later is substantially existent prior to its production. If that which already exist is produced later, what has already been produced will come into existence again, which is purposeless. As a consequence the effect would find no opportunity for production, since the cause must reproduce itself until the end.)

.
L7: [(5) Refuting that Yogic perception of wished for objects directly perceives future things]
L8: [(a) Actual meaning]

.
\ ###
\ 261.
\ If future things are seen,
\ Why is the non-existent not seen?
\ For one for whom the future exists
\ There can be no distant [time].

.
(i.e. The Middle-Way about the nature of the three times: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. It is false to pretend that one can see the future as if really existing now. But still this doesn't mean that the future is completely non-existent either. A Buddha can directly see their real non-dual nature: the beginningless chain of causes, and the endless chain of effects. A flow of interdependence without any inherently existing entities in it.)

.
(-- Assertion: The future exist because there is Yogic perception of wished-for objects which focuses on future things, and because predictions concerning the future are later seen to turn out just as predicted. This is impossible in relation to a barren woman's child.

-- Answer ab: If future things are directly perceived by way of their own entity in the period before their production, why are non-existent things not seen? It follows that they would be seen, for it is not feasible to make distinctions between what is seen and not seen with regard to the non-existent. Such fallacies arise for those who assert that the past and future exist by way of their own entity, but no fallacies accrue to us who assert the three times as arising dependently without inherent existence.

Buddhas directly perceive in the present even those things which will occur after ten millions aeons. Though they are future at the time of the consciousness perceiving them, they are neither non-functional nor permanent for they will not remain for a second moment after their formation. There is no need for a Buddha to cognize the present explicitly and the past and future implicitly, for though the latter do not exist at that time, they are in general directly perceived. Similarly it is not contradictory for objects of aspiration, though they do not exist at that time, to appear clearly to Yogic perception of that which is wished for, just as a dream appears to be real.

Even though the barley seed exists, the sprout which has not yet come into existence may be called future but the sprout itself must not be called future. An understanding of the other two times should be inferred from this. In our own system we accept that Buddhas perceive all three times directly and not at all assert to trainees that they merely appear to do so.

-- cd: Moreover there cannot be a distant time for a protagonist for whom the future exists by way of its own entity because the future exists in terms of its own entity.)

.
L8: [(b) Consequence that fresh restraint from non-virtue and so forth
are unnecessary if the future is substantially existent]

.
\ ###
\ 262.
\ If virtue exists though nothing is done,
\ Resolute restraint is meaningless.
\ If even a little is done
\ The effect cannot exist.

.
(i.e. If the future already exist. There is no need to work on it, no need for a path.)

(-- If, because the future is substantially existent, virtue exists without actions such as safeguarding one's ethical conduct once one's faculties have become mature through meeting a spiritual friend and listening to teaching, resolute restraint from unethical conduct and so forth for the sake of future results [such as a high rebirth] is meaningless, for virtue will exist even if that has not been done. If even the slightest thing is done to enhance one's capability, future effects cannot be substantially existent. It is impossible!)

L8: [(c) If impermanent it is contradictory for something to exist prior to its production]

\\ ###
\\ 263.
\\ If they are impermanent
\\ How can it be said effects exist?
\\ That which has a beginning and end
\\ is called impermanent in the world.

(i.e. Future is not existent: To say that something exist inherently and is impermanent is a contradiction. All future (effects) are empty of inherent existence. The future is not something existing, nor non-existing.)

(-- In accordance with the assertion that all composite things are impermanent, all functional things are impermanent. -- How can it be said that an effect exist prior to its production? It is unreasonable since impermanence and existence prior to production are contradictor. Anything which has a beginning, in that it is newly produced, and an end, in that it does not last for a second moment after the time of its formation, is called impermanent in the world.)

L6: [b. Refuting the assertions of Sautrantikas and so forth]

\\ ###
\\ 264.
\\ Liberation will occur without exertion.
\\ For the liberated there is no future,
\\ Or otherwise, if this were so,
\\ Desire would arise without attachment.

(i.e. Future is not non-existent: At the other extreme: future is not non-existent at all; otherwise there would be no causality at all, no bounding, and no possibility for liberation. -- Liberation is not an effect, a future; it is not produced through our own effort, or following an absolute path. Liberation is beyond causality space and time. But, still, without a path combining the accumulation of merit and wisdom we will probably remain in samsara for an eternity. The Middle-Way not accepting a path as absolute, not rejecting all virtuous paths as if useless. We need both method and wisdom together all the time.)

(-- According to Sautrantikas and so forth who assert that future functional things do not have the slightest existence, liberation will occur without any exertion to generate the paths of the Exalted in order to prevent future disturbing emotions and suffering, because future things do not exist. This would be like liberated Foe Destroyers for whom there are no future disturbing emotions and so forth and who thus do not need to exert themselves because of them. If the future were non-existent and desire were to arise without there being a person, consciousness and so forth or predispositions for attachment as a basis, it follows that desire would arise in a Foe Destroyer too.

-- The words "or otherwise" imply "or otherwise the future is not non-existent.")

L4: [B. Refutation by examining whether the effect exists or not]

\\ ###
\\ 265.
\\ For those who assert effects exist,
\\ And for those who assert they do not exist,
\\ Adornments like pillars and so forth
\\ For a home are purposeless.

(i.e. The Middle Way about future, avoiding both extremes: accepting future or effect as if inherently existing (realism), rejecting future as if completely not-existing (nihilism). In both case morality would be useless.)

.
(-- Samkhyas say that since what is non-existent cannot be produced, and since the effect is present in the cause in a potential form, the fallacy that anything arises from anything does not occur.
-- Some Vaibhasikas assert that the three times are substantially existent and that effects exist prior to their production.
-- Sautrantikas and so forth assert that although things are truly existent, future effects are non-existent.
It follows that for all of these, adornments such as pillars for a resultant home are purposeless, since according to some it exist from the outset, while according to others the future home is non-existent, like a barren woman's child. For proponents of dependent arising free from inherent existence, there is no possibility of error and thus everything is properly established.
In meditative equipoise the Exalted who are still learning do not perceive dependently arising phenomena as existent. Failure to distinguish between this non-perception and the perception of phenomena as non-existent, as well as inability to posit conventional valid cognition in one's own system, seem to give rise to numerous errors. One must therefore master the meaning of the establishment of the two truths by valid cognition in our own system.)
.

L4: [C. Refuting a truly existent present]

.
\ ###
\ 266.
\ The transformation of things also
\ Is not perceived even by the mind.
\ Those who lack wisdom nevertheless
\ Think that the present exists.
.

(i.e. Emptiness of present: It is contradictory to think that things exist and change. Actual change, production, origination or cessation, ... are not seen. So there is no clear present.)
.

(-- Assertion: Although existence of the past and future are being refuted, the present exists. Since it does, the future exist too, for the principal, giving up its state of futurity, assumes the state of present curd. Thus the present exists.
-- Answer: It is not feasible for the principal, which is matter and permanent by nature, also to undergo temporary changes into things like milk and curd. Such transformations are not perceived even by mental consciousness that engages with extremely subtle objects, let alone observed by the five kinds of sense consciousness. Although transformation with respect to the present and its causes is not observed, those who lack wisdom and are ignorant about the meaning of suchness consider the present truly existent.)
.

L3: [II. Refuting the proof [of substantially established time]]

L4: [A. Refuting existence of substantially established functional things as a basis for time]

L5: [1. Refutation by examining whether or not things have duration]

L6: [a. Actual meaning]

.
\ ###
\ 267.
\ How can there be things with no duration?
\ Being impermanent, how can they endure?
\ If they had duration first,
\ They would not grow old in the end.
.

(i.e. No objective absolute basis for time: Time is usually measured by the duration of something; but there is no real origination, duration, or cessation. Nothing functional is truly existing as shown in another chapter.)
.

(-- Assertion: Time exists because functional things which acts as the basis for imputing time exist. Since time may be investigated by considering functional things but not on its own, time is truly existent.
-- Answer: How can functional things, the basis for time, be truly existent? It follows that they are not because of not having inherent duration. How could they have inherent duration, since they are continually consumed by impermanence? Moreover, if they had inherent duration at the start, they would not grow old in the end, because that which is inherently existent cannot cease.)
.

L6: [b. Proving that duration is not inherently existent]

.
\ ###
\ 268.
\ Just as a single consciousness
\ Cannot apprehend two objects,
\ Similarly two consciousnesses
\ Cannot apprehend one object.
.

(i.e. Duration is not directly perceptible; so it is no objective absolute basis to measure time.)

(-- Furthermore there is no inherent duration, for just as a single moment of consciousness does not apprehend two consecutive objects actually presenting their own likeness, two consecutive moments of consciousness do not apprehend a single object simultaneously, for they undergo momentary production and disintegration.

-- Objection: Well, that contradicts the assertion in the sutras of knowledge that five objects such as visual form are each apprehended by two kinds of consciousness.

-- Answer: If one does not accept momentary disintegration, one is not a Buddhist. If one does, the object of observation of a visual consciousness cannot act as object of observation for a subsequently arising consciousness. The sutra passage means that the visual consciousness cognizes the form clearly and the mental consciousness which is produced subsequently cognizes it in an unclear way.)

L5: [2. Refutation by examining whether or not time has duration]

.
\ ###
\ 269.
\ If time has duration
\ Duration is not time.
\ If it has not, without duration
\ There will also be no end.
.

(i.e. Duration cannot be used to define or prove the existence of an absolute time – or vice versa: Like the characteristics and the characterized, time and duration are not two separate things, nor the same. One cannot be used to prove the other. They are interdependent, two co-dependently arisen concepts.)

(-- Assertion: Duration has inherent existence because of being the characteristic of present time.

-- Answer: If time and duration are different and have an inherently established relationship, they must act as basis and that which is based upon it.

-- If duration relies on time as something separate, duration is not time because they are mutually exclusive. If time does not have duration, then without duration there cannot finally be disintegration. Therefore since time does not have inherent duration, the latter is unsuitable as the present's characteristic.)

L5: [3. Refutation by examining whether things and impermanence are one or different]

.
\ ###
\ 270.
\ If impermanence and things are separate
\ Things are not impermanent.
\ If they are one, since things are precisely that which is
\ Impermanent, how can they have duration?
.

(i.e. Impermanence cannot be used to prove the existence (duration) of something. Like the characteristics and the characterized, impermanence and something (a duration) are not separate, not the same. In both case there would be no duration possible. One cannot be used to prove the other. They are interdependent, two co-dependently arisen concepts. It is contradictory to say that something exist and is impermanent.)

(-- Assertion: Duration exists because there are impermanent things that have duration.

-- Answer: If impermanence and functional things are separate in nature, it follows that things are not impermanent. If this is accepted, they must be permanent. If things and impermanence are one, since precisely that which is impermanent is a functional thing, how can they have inherent duration? Duration is impossible.)

L5: [4. Refutation by examining which is stronger, duration or impermanence]

L6: [a. Consequence that subsequent reversal is unfeasible if impermanence is weaker]

.
\ ###
\ 271.
\ If duration is not weak
\ Because impermanence is weak,
\ Why should a reversal
\ Afterwards be seen?

.
(i.e. Refutation of another position: some think duration and impermanence are two alternate characteristics of everything. But that doesn't explain anything. What makes the switch from duration to impermanence if duration is stronger?)

.
(-- Assertion: While things continue to exist, duration is stronger and impermanence weaker, but it is not impossible for the weak to overcome the strong.

-- Answer: How can such a reversal be seen when things later finally become impermanent? It follows that it is unfeasible. If duration is not weaker because impermanence is weaker while things continue to exist, nothing can harm what has inherent strength.)

.
L6: [b. Consequence that nothing will have duration if impermanence is stronger]

.
\ ###
\ 272.
\ If impermanence is not weaker
\ And is present in all things,
\ None of them will have duration
\ Or nor all are impermanent.

.
(i.e. On the other hand, if impermanence is the dominant characteristic, then nothing has duration. Or is it that some things are permanent.)

.
(-- If impermanence is not weaker and is present in functional things at all times, it follows that all functional things do not have inherent duration, for impermanence, which overrides it, is always present. Alternatively, if not all things are impermanent, it follows that those which are not are permanent, because impermanence is weaker and duration has inherent strength.)

.
L6: [c. Consequence that what was permanent will later be impermanent if duration is stronger]

.
\ ###
\ 273.
\ If there is always impermanence
\ There cannot always be duration,
\ or else that which was permanent
\ later becomes impermanent.

.
(i.e. All of this is absurd. Those two cannot be to separate and alternate characteristics.)

.
(-- Furthermore, does impermanence arise together with the products it characterizes or does it arise later?

-- If there is always impermanence because that which is characterized and its characteristics are inevitably concomitant, it follows that duration is not inherently existent. Alternatively, having been permanent, a thing would later become impermanent, and if it remained for a second moment, it would be permanent. Yet one thing cannot be both permanent and impermanent.)

.
L5: [5. Refuting that both exist together]

.
\ ###

\ 274.
\ If things have duration
\ And impermanence together,
\ Either it is wrong that things are impermanent,
\ or duration is a fallacy.

.
(i.e. Nor can they exist simultaneously.)

.
(-- The characteristics of products are concomitant with one another. Thus if one accepts that the duration of a thing's existence and the impermanence of its existence are simultaneously of one nature with a thing, either it is wrong that things are impermanent or else inherent duration is a fallacy. These two can exist together in false products [which do not exist as they appear] but cannot have a common locus in truly existent functional things.)

.
L4: [B. Refuting proof based on memory of the past]

.
\ ###
\ 275.
\ Things seen do not reappear,
\ Nor does awareness arise again.
\ Thus memory is in fact deceived
\ With regard to a deceptive object.

.
(i.e. The Middle Way about past: the past is not inherently existing, not non-existing either. The causes are not absolute, nor are they without any effect. Memories are not inherently existing, absolute; they are not without any foundation at all either. Empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.)

.
(-- Assertion: Time exists because there is past time depending on past products. If that were not so, it would be impossible to remember past rebirths, thinking that one was this or that in the past.

-- Answer: This proof of time's true existence is also without the slightest substance. Memory focuses on an object which one has experienced.

-- Though things seen previously do not reappear later, and though awareness observing objects belonging to a past rebirth does not occur again, memory arises with a sense of seeing as one sees present objects. Memory which is in fact mistaken and deceived arises in relation to a so-called remembered object which is false and deceptive like an optical illusion. However, we do not deny that memory focusing on past objects arises dependently. This is certainly accepted in our own system.)

.
L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

.
\ ###
\ Not knowing how to posit continuity and transitoriness,
\ They say time is permanent and the three times exist substantially.
\ Having understood that phenomena are like optical illusions,
\ Learn how the three times are perceived.

.
(i.e. There is no need for inherently existing time to support dependent origination / karma: Because we observe some regularity and continuity, and long to be able to control everything, we assume the inherent existence of causes, effects, space and time as if objectively existing. We think dependent origination implies inherent existence. But, on the contrary, dependent origination implies emptiness of inherent existence, and vice versa. Causes, effects, space and time are not inherently existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither. They are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen, co-dependently arisen concepts.)

.
\ ###
\ This is the eleventh chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on refuting time.

.
This concludes the commentary on the eleventh chapter, showing how to meditate on refuting time, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L2: [Chapter 12 - Refuting Wrong Views – We need a gradual path combining virtuous methods and wisdom. There is no final view to arrive to. -- P.239]

(i.e. SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON REFUTING VIEWS.

-- Refuting the true existence of that which is viewed.

-- Importance of a gradual path

-- Danger -- Do not present emptiness to an unprepared student; he might react in rejecting everything, or misunderstand completely -- going to the other extreme. He might even kill you :-)

-- Required qualities: open-minded and unbiased, intelligent and interested -- in the absence of these qualities the consequences may be grave.

-- Even though, ultimately, the right view is preferable to the right conduct, it is preferable to start with morality based on protecting a self; until they are calm and their great fear is appeased enough.

-- So it should not be presented to the beginners, they would have great fear, or misunderstand it

-- Non receptivity may be due to:

-- fear of annihilation, based on unfamiliarity

-- misinterpretation of emptiness, due to knowing just a little

-- resistance to change

-- attachment to one's own views and practices -- thinking they are impartial, exact, absolute -- identifying self with those, being proud of those

-- pride, conceit, partisanship

-- People judge from their own erroneous position thinking it is impartial; when they do not understand, they accuse the teacher

-- (Because of past successes, they have adopted views, they have invested in them; and they will question them only if they fail; and they will fail)

-- Fear is caused by unfamiliarity

-- People fear emptiness thinking it is annihilation

-- Emptiness destroys all views

-- Importance: Emptiness is the only final antidote (all other methods, practices, and views, are to gradually prepare the student for it)

-- Emptiness destroys all other views

-- All views are flawed because they are all based on inherent existence of something or another

-- All views are flawed; all other paths are attachment

-- It destroys all other views, but not in order to gain personal advantages in debates -- that would be like taking side for some views against others

-- It fights all extremes

-- desire and fear

-- attachment due to eternalism, fear due to annihilationism

-- liberating from unfulfilled desires, obsessions, fears,

-- The only things you need

-- Methods: temporary antidotes, based on non-violence (morality, then love and compassion), based on dependent origination, things, self ...

-- Wisdom: the final antidote, based on emptiness

-- (The two accumulations: merit and wisdom)

-- The truth is very subtle and hard to appreciate; people are more attracted first with short term superficial easy solutions -- it takes a shock to start looking for something deeper

-- See for yourself the truth about dependent origination and emptiness; do not rely just on scriptures and blind faith

-- You do not need to adopt any other views, knowledge, practices

-- Why waste time with superficial inefficient ridiculous solutions

-- Do not get impressed by those superficialities; they are dead ends

L3: [I. Why most ordinary people do not follow this teaching]

L4: [A. Difficulty of finding a listener with the prerequisite qualities]

L5: [1. Prerequisite qualities of the listener]

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\
 276.
\
 An unprejudiced, intelligent and interested
\
 Listener is called a vessel.
\
 Neither the teacher's nor the student's
\
 Good qualities will be taken as faults.
.

(i.e. Prerequisites: Not everybody is receptive enough at first. Many find faults in the teachings because they are conditioned by their own accumulated karma. One has to be open-minded, intelligent and interested.)

.
(-- The twelfth chapter begins by examining what qualities make one an ideal recipient for explanations concerning emptiness. Only benefit ensues for both student and teacher when the nature of reality is explained to such a person, while in the absence of these qualities the consequences may be grave.

-- The ideal recipient for instruction on emptiness is therefore open-minded, intelligent and interested.

-- Question: even though you have explained selflessness very clearly and extensively and the Tathagata fully understood and gave instruction on it, why do most people not follow this teaching?

-- Answer: Although the one who formulated it and those who elucidate it may be the perfect embodiment of greatness, a listener with great qualities is extremely hard to find.

-- What qualities does one need?

-- Answer: One should be unprejudiced, without attachment to one's own position or aversion to others' positions. Heart of the Middle Way says:

~ One will never know peace

~ While prejudice afflicts the mind.

-- If one is not unprejudiced one will fail to understand a good explanation because of thinking it is someone else's. One must have the intelligence to distinguish between good and bad explanations, otherwise one may reject correct explanations and adopt incorrect ones. A keen interest in good explanations is needed, for without that one will make no effort and simply be like the lifeless picture of a human being. One should appreciate and be attentive to the teaching and the teacher. A listener with these five qualities is said to be a vessel for the teaching. Someone with all these attributes will recognize the teacher's good qualities and fully understand the clarity and orderliness of the teaching, as well as the good intentions of other listeners. The teacher's lack of self-interest and the like will not be seen as faults and other than as they are, but only as virtues. Nor will the good qualities of the listeners be construed as faults.)

L5: [2. Disadvantages of not possessing the prerequisite qualities]

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 ###
\
 277.
\
 He explained existence and its causes,
\
 The means to peace and peace itself.
\
 What people do not understand
\
 Is seen as the Subduer's [fault].
.

(i.e. When with too much bad karma: People judge from their own erroneous position, under the influence of accumulated karma, thinking it is impartial.)

.
(-- Someone who is not genuinely open-minded and unbiased easily misunderstand even what has been well and clearly explained.

-- Although the teacher may be perfect, if the listeners lack the prerequisite qualities, they will not recognize their own faults but will consider faults as virtues and virtues as faults.

-- The Subduer taught about worldly existence in the form of the five contaminated and suffering aggregates and about true sources, the cause of worldly existence. He taught about true paths, the means to peace, such as the eightfold path of the Exalted, and also about peace, liberation and nirvana. He taught the four noble truths for those who seek liberation, but ordinary people who make no effort to hear, think and meditate are unaware that they do not possess all the qualities of a suitable vessel. Whatever they fail to understand correctly, they see as the Subduer's fault, saying he did not explain it in sufficient detail. However, merely that does not mean the Teacher is to blame. A blind person's inability to see is not the sun's fault.)

L5: [3. Eliminating arguments]

L6: [a. Proving the Subduer's omniscience]

L7: [(1) Appropriateness of being glad about the teaching of emptiness
which annihilates suffering and its sources]

.
\ ###
\ 278.
\ These strange people all agree that by
\ Giving up everything one attains nirvana.
\ For what reason do they dislike
\ That which puts an end to all?

.
(i.e. Grasping at the Hinayana approach: Some people can accept the Hinayana teachings but refuse to see the benefits of the Mahayana teachings because they are grasping at their own views as if it was an absolute truth, an absolute path.)

.
(-- Although one may accept that liberation can be achieved by overcoming faulty states of mind, lack of open-mindedness prevents one from recognizing that only a correct understanding of reality can eradicate them completely.
-- Assertion: Although the Subduer's discussion of high rebirth is extremely clear, we do not understand or approve of his discussion of definite goodness, since the teaching that everything is without inherent existence refutes the very nature of things.
-- Answer: These strange Samkhyas, Vaisheshikas and the like, who believe in liberation, all agree that one attains nirvana by giving up attachment to everything associated with disturbing emotions, such as pleasure, pain and so forth. Why do they dislike it when the person and aggregates are said to be empty of existence by way of their own entities? The understanding of this destroys all that is associated with disturbing emotions. Therefore they should be glad. Sutra says:
~ In nirvana there are no phenomena.
~ Whatever does not exist then never existed.
~ The suffering of those with ideas of existence and non-existence
~ Who act accordingly will not be pacified.

.
Since only the Buddha's words contain undistorted statements about suchness, and Samkhyas and so forth do not make even the slightest mention of it, one should recognize it as a unique teaching.)

.
L7: [(2) Why there is no liberation in any teaching other than the Teacher's]

.
\ ###
\ 279.
\ How will one who does not know
\ The means to give it up, do so?
\ Certainly, therefore, the Subduer said
\ There is no peace in any other [teaching].

.
(i.e. It is not about artificially dropping all, but about directly seeing the real nature of everything: They do not know how to drop all attachments; they have no methods. It only by directly seeing the real nature of our own mind, and thus of everything, that all attachments and fears are automatically dropped. It is not by artificially trying to drop them all that one attain Nirvana. Nirvana is not produced by doing this or not doing that, by getting this or dropping that; it is beyond causality space and time.)

.
(-- Question: If these strange people all agree that one attains nirvana by giving up everything, what difference is there between you and the Followers?
-- Answer: They are different in that they merely have the wish to give everything up but do not know how to do so.
-- How can those belonging to other systems give up cyclic existence while they cling to the wrong methods? They do not know that the means to give it up is to understand that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence. Therefore certainly with this in mind the Subduer said, "The first practitioner of virtue has come about thus. The second and third have come about thus. The fourth has come about thus. Others' doctrines lack such practitioners of virtue." On account of this he said, "There is no peace in any teaching other than this.")

.
L7: [(3) Means to gain certainty regarding extremely hidden matters taught by the Teacher]

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\ ###
\ 280.
\ Whoever doubts what the Buddha said
\ About that which is hidden
\ Should rely on emptiness
\ And gain conviction in him alone.
.

(i.e. Gradually gaining confidence and faith in this Buddha's teachings can be done first by understanding intellectually the importance and efficacy of realizing the emptiness of all dharmas in the elimination of all causes of suffering. One also realize then that a mere intellectual understanding is not enough to actualize Nirvana, but one has to directly see this truth in his own mind in action in the present.)

.
(-- It is thus vital to gain conviction in the importance and efficacy of understanding emptiness.
-- Question: If he is omniscient, he must have super-knowledge of hidden things such as the size of Mount Meru and the continents, but how can one be sure of that?
-- Answer: One can ascertain it with the help of inference.
-- One might wonder whether what the Buddha has said is true or not regarding the size of the abodes, bodies and lifespans of the six kinds of gods of the Desire Realm and so forth from whom one is separated by time and place, and regarding the size of the human physical world and so on, all of which are hidden to common beings. To dispel such doubts one should take as example the fact that the feature of the two truths which are very subtle and difficult to understand -- the teaching that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence together with the feasibility of all actions and agents -- are actually as he explained. Understanding through this that the extremely hidden things he taught are just as he described, one should gain conviction that he alone is omniscient. Having ascertained dependent arising free from fabricated extremes through correct reasoning without relying on scriptural citations as proof, one should ascertain extremely hidden things relying on the Buddha's words as reason. Regarding the general presentation of this, the explanations of Dignaga and his spiritual son are like those of the great trailblazers. In this context objects can be understood through the presentation of four kinds of valid cognition.)
.

L6: [b. Showing that others' teachers are not authentic]

.
\ ###
\ 281.
\ Those who find it hard to see
\ This world are ignorant of others.
\ Those who follow them will be
\ Misled for a very long time.
.

(i.e. Not all paths are equal. Some paths proposed by ignorants only create more attachment to views, more conditioning (bad karma), more obstacles to Liberation.)

.
(-- Through lack of intelligence people follow misleading teachers and are led astray into thickets of wrong views.
-- Non-Buddhist teachers who have difficulty in discerning even the way coarse cause and effect operate in relation to the physical environment and inhabitants of this world are ignorant regarding other subtle matters. People who follow them will thus come under the influence of innate and intellectually formed attitudes which must be given up, and they will be misled for a very long time. Those interested in their own good should leave false teachers. They should trust and value the true one.)
.

L4: [B. Difficulty of understanding the meaning of the fundamental mode of existence]

L5: [1. Why emptiness is feared]

L6: [a. Why some, although seeking liberation, follow the Forders]

.
\ ###
\ 282.
\ The unwise take no delight in letting
\ Their mind follow a guide
\ Who has done that which is
\ Most difficult -- attained nirvana.
.

.
(i.e. Lack of interest: Because they do not find short term gratification for their self, and fear emptiness. See next verse.)
.

(-- Lack of interest prevents one from finding out how to gain liberation and from following what was explained by the Buddha who taught from his own experience.

-- Question: Why do those who seek liberation follow the Forders?

-- Answer: Because they are afraid to listen to teaching on emptiness. It is as follows: "the four lines of this verse".

-- To be taken care by a spiritual friend and go to the city of Nirvana, having rid oneself of the stains of conceiving things as truly existent, is very difficult. Though one with great compassion who did what was difficult to do has come to guide them, unwise people take no delight in letting their minds follow this guide because they fear emptiness.)
.

L6: [b. Recognizing a person who fears emptiness]

.
\ ###
\ 283.
\ When it is not seen, fear does not begin.
\ When seen, it stops completely.
\ Thus one can say with certainty;
\ Those who know a little are afraid.
.

(i.e. Fear of emptiness: They fear because they know a little, but not enough, about emptiness.)
.

(-- Ingrained ideas about the self prevent ordinary people from considering the possibility of emptiness and cause them to fear it.

-- Question: Who is afraid?

-- Answer: People like cowherds, who see neither virtues nor faults in it, can hear about emptiness a hundred times without beginning to feel afraid, because they do not regard it as either beneficial or harmful. When one perceives emptiness directly through a gradual process of hearing, thinking and meditating, fear stops completely because one is free from conceptions of a self which are the cause of fear. Thus one can say with certainty that fear arises in people who have only a little knowledge of emptiness. It is like the following analogy: A well-trained person is not afraid to mount a mad elephant, nor is an extremely stupid person. Yet someone who knows a little about the dangers and benefits involved feels frightened.)
.

L6: [c. Why childish people fear emptiness]

.
\ ###
\ 284.
\ Childish beings are certainly only
\ Familiar with that which involves them.
\ Because of unfamiliarity
\ They fear that which extricates them.
.

(i.e. All of this because of unfamiliarity with emptiness: It is a childish reaction due to unfamiliarity with emptiness)
.

(-- Question: Why do they fear emptiness?

-- Answer: Because of a lack of familiarity.

--- Childish beings are certainly only familiar with innate and intellectually formed conception of a self which involve them in cyclic existence. Since such childish beings have no previous familiarity with a teaching that extricates one from the cycle of birth and death, they fear emptiness. One should therefore give up doctrines that are wrong and unwholesome.

-- Emptiness should be taught to those who, because they feel grateful to the Tathagata, are suitable vessels, but who, because of their great fear, are tempted to reject it.)
.

L5: [2. Faults of impeding others' understanding of emptiness]

.
\ ###
\ 285.
\ If someone who is shrouded in
.

\ Complete ignorance and impedes suchness
\ Will not even attain good fortune,
\ What need to mention liberation?

(i.e. The need of a gradual path: Do not present emptiness to an unprepared student; he might react in rejecting everything, or misunderstand completely -- going to the other extreme, nihilism.)

-- Since rejecting emptiness makes it difficult to attain a good rebirth and impossible to achieve liberation, great care must be taken to prepare students sufficiently and ensure that they are receptive, otherwise this precious teaching acts as a poison instead of panacea.

-- Someone who not only has a total disregard for emptiness but is completely shrouded in ignorance and impedes teaching, hearing and thinking about suchness out of jealousy, meanness and the like will not even attain the good fortune of a high rebirth. This being so, what chance is there of such a person attaining liberation, since such actions are grave ill deeds? Rejecting dependent arising free from fabricated extremes is a more serious ill deed than killing a hundred million people, so one must take care in this matter to avoid deceiving oneself.)

L5: [3. Taking care to lapse from the view of suchness]

\ ###
\ 286.
\ Lapsing from ethics is preferable
\ To lapsing from the view.
\ Through ethics one gains a high rebirth;
\ The supreme state is reached by means of the view.

(i.e. Even if only emptiness is the final antidote: But, ultimately, only the wisdom realizing the emptiness of all dharmas is the final antidote to all karma formation and sufferings. All other methods can only create merit and better rebirth conditions; but we are still stuck in samsara. It is always necessary to combine wisdom to any method.)

-- Since denying emptiness is most detrimental to oneself and others, a lapse in ethical conducts is preferable. One should never lapse from the view of emptiness, for while the result of ethical conduct is a high rebirth, the view that understands emptiness takes one to the supreme states of liberation and enlightenment. Sutra says:

~ A lapse in ethics is preferable;
~ A lapse in view is not.)

L5: [4. Stages leading towards suchness]

\ ###
\ 287.
\ For the unreceptive, conceptions of a self are best;
\ To teach them selflessness is not.
\ They would go to bad rebirths,
\ While the extraordinary attain peace.

(i.e. It is preferable to start with morality based on protecting a self from unwanted rebirths; until they are calm and their great fear is appeased enough.)

-- A skilled teacher can recognize who is and who is not ready to receive such instruction.

-- The wise only teach the view of suchness after carefully examining the vessel. It is also said:

~ Taught to fools, it confuses them
~ And does not further peace.
~ When snakes drink milk
~ Their poison only increases.

-- It is best to teach the uneducated and unreceptive that there is a self in accordance with their conceptions of a self, for their attachment to the self will cause them to give up harmful behavior, making it easier for them to find a happy rebirth. It is not good to teach them emptiness, for they will ruin their three doors by rejecting or misunderstanding it. Thus teaching emptiness has a disadvantageous as well as an advantageous aspect. On the one hand, rejecting it through lack of appreciation or denying cause and effect because of taking non-existence to be the meaning of emptiness leads

to a bad rebirth. On the other hand, the extraordinary who have mastered suchness attain peace.)

L5: [5. Recognizing suchness]

L6: [a. Recognizing the fundamental mode of existence]

.\ ###
.\ 288.
.\ There is no other door to peace,
.\ And it destroys wrong views.
.\ That which is the object of
.\ All Buddhas is called selflessness.

(i.e. But, ultimately, only emptiness is the final antidote; all other temporary views or methods are destroyed by emptiness. Ultimately, there is no absolute views, only adapted skillful means. All views and methods are empty of inherent existence – even this one.)

(-- The text continues by briefly identifying the nature of reality and explaining its importance, since neither liberation nor enlightenment can be reached without understanding it.

-- One must definitely understand suchness to reach enlightenment in any of the three vehicles.

-- Since the root of worldly existence cannot be cut without understanding emptiness, there is no other door to peace.

Dependent arising's lack of inherent existence is called the fundamental mode of existence, ultimate truth, emptiness and selflessness, and is the object of Hearer and Solitary Realizer Exalted one and of all Exalted Buddhas.

Understanding it destroys wrong views holding to extremes.)

L6: [b. Why fear arises in the weak]

.\ ###
.\ 289.
.\ The unreceptive are terrified
.\ Just by its very name.
.\ What so-called strong man is seen
.\ Who does not frighten the weak?

(i.e. The weak are always afraid of power: So it should not be presented to the beginners, they would have great fear.)

(-- Selflessness must not be taught to the weak-minded for the very word "emptiness" terrifies the unreceptive. Does one see any so-called strong man who does not frighten the weak? For instance, just the sight of a lion or tiger frightens small animals.)

L4: [C. The profound is not taught for the sake of argument]

L5: [1. Although not taught for the sake of debate this very teaching burns up wrong contentions]

.\ ###
.\ 290.
.\ This principle is not taught
.\ By Tathagatas for the sake of debate,
.\ Yet it burns up others' contentions
.\ As fire does its fuel.

(i.e. It is not another view or system: It is a negation without affirming anything. It is like space. It destroys all other views, but not in order to gain personal advantages. It means that the real nature of everything is not inherent existence, not non-existent, not both existent and non-existent together, and not anything else – another view. The real nature of everything is beyond all conceptualization, all systems, all views. – Emptiness itself is not an absolute truth; it is also just another adapted skillful means. When there is no belief in inherent existence, there is no need for its antidote: emptiness. Emptiness is also empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.)

(-- The purpose of studying it is soteriological and not to outshine opponents in debate. Nevertheless, since a person

who understands emptiness cannot be beguiled by wrong views based on false arguments, understanding it automatically destroys the deceptive reasoning used by others.

-- Assertion: Since this teaching destroys all wrong views, it should be taught to the unreceptive in order to defeat its opponents.

-- Answer: Tathagatas do not teach this principle only to outshine opponents in debate but as the door to liberation. Nonetheless this teaching of emptiness burns up others' wrong contentions just as fire consumes its fuel without formulation the intention to burn. The Master also says:

- ~ Like the dew on the tips of the grass
- ~ When it meets with the rays of the sun,
- ~ Opponents' arguments and errors
- ~ Evaporate when they meet you.)

L5: [2. Why this is so]
L6: [a. Actual meaning]

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\ ###
\ 291.
\ Whoever knows this teaching
\ Will not relish others.
\ Thus to me this teaching seems
\ Like the door to destruction.

.
(i.e. Emptiness is merely the antidote to any view, to inherent existence: It destroys all other views because they are all based on the inherent existence of something or another. By realizing the real nature of anything, its dependence and lack of inherent existence, one automatically drop any attachment or fears associated with it. Ultimately all views are seen as flawed, or not absolute; but still can be used when appropriate as adapted skillful means.)

.
(-- Question: How does this teaching burn up others' contentions, when understanding of it arises in the mind of someone with interest in it?

-- Answer: Whoever comes to know the nectar-like taste of this teaching, the emptiness of inherent existence, through hearing, thinking and meditating will not relish views adhering to the true existence of things. The Master Aryadeva therefore says that this teaching of emptiness seems to him like the door and means to the destruction of wrong views. Alternatively he says it with texts on emptiness in mind, in that the words of the Buddha that teach emptiness also seem like this to the Master.)

L6: [b. Why the Exalted do not experience fear]

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\ ###
\ 292.
\ For those who think there is
\ In reality no self and abide in this thought,
\ How will existence cause pleasure
\ Or non-existence cause fear?

.
(i.e. No more cause for attachments and fears: By realizing the real nature of anything, its dependence and lack of inherent existence, one automatically drop any attachment or fears associated with it.)

.
(-- Question: Why does emptiness not cause the Exalted fear?

-- Answer: Because they have destroyed the seed of attachment to the self.

-- Since they have no attachment to views of a self or hostility toward selflessness, how will those who think that external and internal phenomena are in reality selfless and who abide in a direct understanding of this be pleased by the existence of the self or frightened by selflessness? Fear therefore does not arise in those who have direct understanding of selflessness because they have eliminated the cause of fear.)

L5: [3. Appropriateness of compassion for those following wrong paths]

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\ ###
\ 293.

\ Seeing the many Forders
\ Who are seeds of futility,
\ Who would not feel pity
\ For people who long for a teaching?

(i.e. All views, all absolute systems are necessarily flawed: Once one has enough understanding of the emptiness of everything, then a strong feeling of compassion automatically emerge from his heart toward all other beings stuck in samsara without knowing what is right and what is wrong.)

-- How could such a person not fail to pity those who are led away from the truth by false teachers?

-- The Forders' many venomous snakes drive their students into thorny thickets of wrong views holding things to be truly existent, the seed of uninterrupted futile suffering in cyclic existence, daily killing their life force of virtue consistent with liberation. Seeing this and knowing the nature of these teachings, who with a Bodhisattva's disposition would not feel pity for those who long for a teaching that will liberate them from cyclic existence? Therefore one must show sentient beings the path of non-inherent existence so that they will not be ravaged by the Forders' snakes.)

L4: [D. Showing the comparative subtlety and coarseness of our own and others' teaching]

L5: [1. General explanation of why those of inferior intelligence value others' teaching but not the Buddha's]

\ ###
\ 294.
\ The teaching of the Sakyas,
\ Nirgranthas and Brahmins are perceived
\ By the mind, the eyes and the ears.
\ Thus the Subduer's teaching is subtle.

(i.e. People first prefer easy, concrete and superficial methods that are in accord with their own illusions and conditioning. But Liberation cannot be produced by any of those superficial methods alone. It is only through realizing the very subtle nature of everything that one can be truly Liberated from the whole cycle of samsara. On the other hand, to be able to appreciate this one needs to have already accumulated enough merit through virtuous methods.)

-- Since emptiness is difficult to understand, and since the transformation of one's attitude, the focus of Buddhist practice, is hard to achieve, many people choose physical and verbal forms of practice by which they hope to attain liberation.

-- Question: Why, despite their inclination toward virtue, do people mostly follow Forders' systems and not the Buddha's teaching?

-- Answer: Since the teaching of the Sakyas, the Nirgranthas and Brahmins is understood by the mind, the eyes and the ears respectively, the Subduer's textual system is more subtle and thus most people do not follow it. The sun-like view, the understanding of non-inherent existence, is said to illuminate one's mindstream. It destroys all the thickets of unwholesome views. Seeing all products as being like dreams makes one's mindstream stainless. All this must be understood through meditative equipoise, and thus the Sakyas's teaching is subtle. Since the practices of Nirgranthas consist of a lack of hygiene and physical pain caused by the sun and wind, they can be understood by merely seeing them, and since Brahmins take recitation alone as the essence of their practice, it can be understood by hearing it. These are therefore easier to comprehend.)

L5: [2. Specific explanation]

L6: [a. Those seeking liberation should not try these systems]

\ ###
\ 295.
\ Brahmin practices are said
\ Mainly to be an outward show.
\ The practices of Nirgranthas
\ Are said to be mainly stultifying.

(i.e. Most of these methods are not even wholesome enough, or creating enough merit, because they are just for the benefits of the appearances and of the ego. Instead of helping to diminish the ego and the illusions, they amplify them.)

(-- Assertion: If ordinary people engage in outsiders' practices because they may be perceived by coarse forms of awareness, it is right for you to do so too.

-- Answer: Since most Brahmin practices such as recitation, burnt offerings, auspicious incantation, repentance, confession and so forth are mainly an outward show for the sake of reward and respect, it is said that they should not be performed by those who seek liberation. Similarly it is said that most of the Nirgranthas' practices, such as allowing their hair to become matted and employing the five fires, are stultifying. Therefore those who seek liberation should avoid them completely.)

L6: [b. How those of inferior intelligence develop respect]

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 296.
\
 Brahmins are revered
\
 Because they adopt the orthodox.
\
 Nirgranthas are pitied
\
 Because they adopt the deluded.

(i.e. Do are done for short terms benefits and do not constitute a proper progressive path. They do not bring one closer and closer to the real nature of everything.)

(-- Brahmin practices are mainly for outward show. Thus some unintelligent people revere Brahmins because they adopt orthodox practices such as reciting the Vedas ad so forth. They revere and pity Nirgranthas because they adopt painful and deluded forms of behavior such as mortifying the body through sun and wind.)

L6: [c. Why those systems are not excellent teaching]

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 297.
\
 Suffering is a maturation
\
 And thus is not virtuous.
\
 Similarly, birth too is not virtuous,
\
 Being a maturation of actions.

(i.e. No method alone can produce Liberation from samsara: Liberation is not about ascetic practices or Brahmin's views. It is not about doing this or not doing that, getting this or dropping that. All choices are karma formation, all discrimination are based on ignorance. All methods, wholesome or unwholesome actions, are all creating more causes for suffering. Without wisdom they are all bondage. The only way out of samsara is by realizing the real nature of this cycle, the real nature of everything.)

(-- Painful sensations such as mortification of the body are not virtuous but are instead, like the suffering in the hells, the maturation of non-virtuous actions. Similarly, because it is a maturation of past actions as are eyes and so forth, birth as a Brahmin is not something virtuous enabling the attainment of liberation.)

L3: [II. Exposition of good explanation in brief]

L4: [A. Actual meaning]

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 298.
\
 In brief Tathagatas explain
\
 VIRTUE AS NON-VIOLENCE
\
 And EMPTINESS AS NIRVANA --
\
 Here there are only these two.

(i.e. The Middle Way: What we need is both virtuous methods based on non-violence that diminish the importance of the ego and of the illusions (like morality, patience, love, compassion, bodhicitta) and wisdom based on emptiness. One is the accumulation of merit, the other the accumulation of wisdom. But, using only methods (dependent origination) is not enough. And using only wisdom (emptiness) is not enough. We need both method and wisdom together all the time,

because only then are we more and more in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything, with the inseparability of the Two Truths. Only this kind of path can lead to total Enlightenment.)

(-- Although non-violence and emptiness are the salient principles of the Buddha's teaching and the only way by which a good rebirth and liberation can be attained, attachment to their own particular religious practices and views prevents people from adopting what the Buddha taught.

-- Question: If birth and suffering are not virtuous, what is?

-- Answer: Harmful thoughts toward others as well as physical and verbal actions thus motivated constitute violence toward others. Non-violence is the opposite of this, namely the ten virtuous paths of action.

-- In brief Tathagatas say that the principle through which one attains a high rebirth is non-violence. The principle through which liberation is attained is natural nirvana, the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena. By directly experiencing this and recognizing that suffering will never arise again, there is separation from adventitious stains -- the nirvana of separation from adventitious stains. Here [in this system] there are only these two.

"Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning" says:

~ When reality is seen

~ Nirvana is attained; the task is accomplished.

It is posited that having reached the path of seeing one attains mere nirvana. To attain this, all the aggregates do not have to cease. The reason for explaining this here is to show that one definitely needs to understand emptiness to attain liberation.)

L4: [B. Why outsiders do not appreciate the Teacher's doctrine]

\ ###

\ 299.

\ To ordinary people their own position,

\ Like their birthplace, is attractive.

\ Why would you find attractive

\ That which precludes it?

(i.e. The problem: habituation, resistance to change, belief in their own absolutes, pride, conceit, identifying self with those views, personally feeling threatened by opposing ideas. In short people are stuck with their own accumulated conditioning, their own karma; they can't even see what is good for them.)

(-- Question: When outsiders are aware of the Subduer's teaching, why do they not appreciate these two principles?

-- Answer: Because they are attached to their own mistaken positions.

-- Attachment to their own position is something ordinary people have been accustomed to since beginningless time.

Like their birthplace they find it attractive and do not want to give it up because of their attachment. Why would you outsiders find attractive these two principles which preclude and are contrary to your own position? You do not follow the Buddha's teaching because you cling to your own wrong views.)

L3: [III. Advising those who seek emancipation to adopt good explanations]

\ ###

\ 300.

\ The intelligent who seek what is good

\ Adopt what is worthwhile even from others.

\ Does the sun not belong to all

\ On earth who have sight?

(i.e. The requirements: enough open-mindedness, enough understanding of relativity, enough accumulated merit, enough renunciation, enough morality, love and compassion. And access to the Buddha's teachings.)

(-- The wise, however, are unprejudiced enough to adopt whatever is truly beneficial, even if it belongs to a tradition other than their own.

-- Wise people, who see their birthplace as a reason for their difficulties, leave and settle in a prosperous place.

Likewise, intelligent people seek what is good and therefore adopt those points which facilitate the attainment of a high rebirth or liberation once familiarity with them has been gained, even though they are from others' texts. the sun is unbiased and thus provides light for all on earth who have sight. Does it not belong equally to all? Similarly, the practice of these two principles can only be of benefit to everyone. Thus it is fitting to practice them with a sense of appreciation.)

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

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\   ###
\   Become a proper vessel for good explanation
\   And learned in the non-inherent existence of dependent arising,
\   The final object of the path that severs worldly existence,
\   The understanding of which frees from attachment to extreme views.
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(i.e. A gradual path: first accumulate enough merit through the various virtuous methods, then combine it with the gradual development of the wisdom based on emptiness, the only final antidote.)

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\   ###
\   This is the twelfth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on refuting views.
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This concludes the commentary on the twelfth chapter, showing how to meditate on refuting views, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L2: [Chapter 13 - Refuting Truly Existent Sense Organs and Objects –
Refuting direct objective perception of an external reality independent of the mind and karma.
Everything is like an illusion. - P.251]

-- *SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON THE REFUTATION OF SENSE ORGANS AND OBJECTS.*
-- *Refuting the true existence of sense organs and objects.*

(i.e. One of the argument used to assert the true existence of things is based on the supposedly objective perception of everything.)

L3: [I. Extensively explaining the reasoning that refutes true existence]
L4: [A. Refuting true existence of that which is apprehended: the sense objects]
L5: [1. General refutation]
L6: [a. Actual meaning]
L7: [(1) Refuting that a sense consciousness directly perceives
a pot existing by way of its own character]

\\ ###
\\ 301.
\\ When seeing its form, one does not in fact
\\ See the whole pot. Who that knows
\\ Reality would claim that the pot
\\ Is DIRECTLY PERCEPTIBLE also?

(i.e. Direct perception is impossible: otherwise we would perceive all of it, and there could be no mistake. There is no objective perception of an object; we only perceive part of it and make up for the rest. This also applies to the parts. We only perceive stimuli, compare them to memory and extrapolate the rest.)

-- We feel that since objects are directly perceptible they must have true existence. In that case we should see every aspect of an object, such as a pot, at once. A pot, however, consists of many diverse elements of which visual perception apprehends only one, its visual form. Yet this visual form too has its specific components. Therefore the pot and its constituents are merely imputed to a collection of components and do not exist in and of themselves as directly perceptible objects

-- Question: When it says [in stanza 300]:
~ The intelligent who seek what is good
~ Adopt what is worthwhile even from others.
what is this good explanation?

-- Answer: It is about seeing that all phenomena have no inherent existence.

-- Assertion: It is impossible to cognize that all phenomena have no inherent existence, for if they would be totally non-existent like the horns of a donkey and so forth, and would not be directly perceptible. However, since a pot and blue are directly perceptible, all functional things are in fact inherently existent.

-- Answer: It follows that direct perception of a pot which exists by way of its own entity is not feasible. If it were, the awareness perceiving the visible form of the pot should perceive all its parts. Yet when visual consciousness perceives the pot's form, it does not in fact perceive every single part of the pot. Who that knows the reality of things would claim that the pot is directly perceptible? "Also" refers to also blue existent by way of its own character.

The pot is imputed in dependence on eight substances and therefore cannot exist by way of its own character, nor by seeing one part can one see all its parts. Similarly, if fire existed by way of its own entity, the fallacy that it should always keep burning would arise, since it would not require fuel.

Dialecticians contradict both reasoning and common knowledge when they call awareness arising in dependence upon an individual sense organ direct perception, and assert that an awareness free from conceptuality in which a sound image and a generic image may be apprehended as merged is direct perception. Each individual moment of consciousness cannot be a direct perceiver. In the world objects like the waxing moon which are directly perceived by many people, are commonly held to be directly perceptible, whereas that which perceives these objects is not. Furthermore since they assert that sense consciousness is a direct perceiver, it is inconsistent to think that it is also a valid perceiver. An extensive explanation of this may be found in Candrakirti's commentary. It has not been included here for fear that it would be too long.)

L7: [(2) Applying this reasoning to other instances]

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\ ###
\ 302.
\ By means of this very analysis
\ Those with superior intelligence
\ Should refute individuality
\ All that is fragrant, sweet and soft.
.

(i.e. This applies to all five senses; there is no direct perception, no objective perception.)

-- This same analogy procedure should be applied to the objects of the other senses: to sounds, smells, tastes and tactile objects. One will discover that none of these are truly existent directly perceptible objects.

-- By means of this very analysis using the reasoning which refutes the assertion that sense consciousness is a direct perceiver in relation to a pot, blue and so forth, existent by way of their own entity, the wise with superior intelligence refute separately in each case the contention that sense consciousnesses are direct perceivers in relation to fragrances such as the fragrance of jasmine flowers, sweet tastes and that which is soft to touch, all existent by way of their own entity. Since one cannot make distinction such as seeing one part but not seeing others, or distinctions with regard to what touches and what does not, or with regard to closeness and distant in relation to truly existent functional things, such fallacies ensue.)

L7: [(3) Absurdity of positing that other parts are seen because visible form existent
by way of its own character is seen]

.
\ ###
\ 303.
\ If because the form is seen
\ Everything is seen,
\ Why because of what is not seen
\ Would the form not be unseen?
.

(i.e. We perceive only part of it.)

-- Assertion: All parts of the pot are seen when its visual form is seen, for the pot is not a separate entity from its visual form.

-- Answer: If on the grounds that visual consciousness sees the pot's form one can posit that all parts of the pot are seen, why on the grounds that visual consciousness does not perceive the pot's smell would even the visible form, which is accepted as seen, not be unseen? If one posits that all parts are seen because one part is seen, even that which is accepted as seen cannot be posited as seen if one part is not perceived.)

L7: [(4) Refuting direct perception of just visible form existent by way of its own character]

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\ ###
\ 304.
\ There is no direct perception
\ of just the form alone,
\ Because it has a close and distant
\ As well as a central part.
.

(i.e. We perceive only a part of its form.)

-- A close analysis then follows which establishes that all the components that make up a composite, ...

-- Assertion: Though the pot is not a directly perceptible object of comprehension, its visible form is established by direct perception and thus, indirectly, the pot existing by way of its own entity is also directly perceptible.

-- Answer: It follows that there is no direct perception of just the visible form alone existent by way of its own entity, because the visible form too has many parts, such as close, distant and central parts, and is thus imputed in dependence upon many parts. There is not the slightest thing existent by way of its own entity that is directly perceptible to any kind of awareness.)

L7: [(5) Showing that the proof and what is to be proved are alike]

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305.

This also applies when one examines

Whether particles have parts or not.

Thus to prove a thesis by that

Which must be proved is not feasible.

(i.e. And we cannot conclude that the form exist because we see the particles composing it because this is not proven. In fact the same argument about seeing only a part of it also applies to particles.)

(... even particles, have parts.

-- When all the parts are separated, that form is finally reduced to the smallest particles. An investigation of whether particles have parts or not applies to those particles too. If they have parts like a front and a back, they are, like the pot, imputed in dependence upon many parts, in which case they no longer are the smallest particles. If they do not have parts, they cannot exist because of being inapprehensible. Thus it is not feasible to prove that the pot exists by way of its entity as a directly perceptible object of comprehension by means of that which must be proved, for things do not exist by way of their own character.)

L7: [(6) Showing other lines of reasoning]

###

306.

EVERYTHING TOO IS A COMPONENT

AS WELL AS BEING A COMPOSITE.

Thus even a spoken syllable

Does not have existence here.

(i.e. Everything is empty because everything is composed of parts, and there is no direct perception because we see only part of any object – we assume the rest. And this applies to the parts, ...Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependent on its parts. That is how perception works: we receive stimuli based on an endless flow of interdependence, and through habituation we imagine invariants (entities ...) in it in our attempt to try to control it. But all those objects, characteristics, relations, are mere hypothesis, created by our own mind and by conventions. We just forget that they are our own fabrications and think they exist by themselves independently of our own mind out there. Everything is merely imputed by the mind.)

(-- Thus each is simultaneously a component as well as a composite.

-- Moreover when objects apprehended by the physical sense organs are examined, all are components in relation to their composites as well as composites in relation to their components and are therefore merely imputed in dependence upon their parts. As with the analysis of the smallest particle, names, which are ultimately reduced to spoken syllables such as "a," are also just conventions in this world and do not exist by way of their own entity. Thus you must recognize all dependently arising phenomena as mere names and terms.)

L5: [2. Individual refutations]

L6: [a. Refuting that sense organs apprehend objects existing by way of their own entity]

L7: [(1) Refuting truly existent visible objects]

L8: [(a) Refuting objects]

L9: [1: Refuting our own sectarians' contentions]

L9: [a: Refutation by examining whether the color and shape constituting a visible form existing by way of its own character taken as object of apprehension by a visual consciousness are inherently one or different]

###

307.

If a shape is distinct from color

How is shape apprehended?

\ If not distinct, why would the body
\ Not also apprehend color?

.
(i.e. Even parts like shape and color are not directly perceived, not inherently existing characteristics: We do not directly perceive objects through directly perceiving their shape and color, ... Even (parts like) shape and colors are not inherently existing characteristics, independent of anything else, and directly perceptible as if truly existent on their own out there. Here it is proven that shape and color are not two, not one; they are interdependent, thus not existing on their own, not inherently existing. Those characteristics are also dependent on many many other factors. So we first receive stimuli (part of parts), compare them to memory, filter them through accumulated karma, and assume the rest like shape and colors, and then label the object, and then we have the illusion of perceiving the object as if it truly exist on its own. All the possible mistakes (optical illusions, color change due to other factors, miss-identification ...), proves that there is no objective perception of anything.)

.
(-- Assertion: The pot is directly perceptible since visual consciousness sees the pot's visible form existent by way of its own character, consisting of color and shape.

-- Answer: Are color and shape inherently one or distinct? If shape such as length and so forth is inherently distinct from color, how can a visual consciousness take shape as its object of apprehension? It follows that it cannot because shape is an entity distinct from color. Alternatively, if they are not distinct but inherently one, why does touch not apprehend color in the dark just as it apprehends shape? It follows that it should because they are one.)

.
L9: [b: Refutation through the consequence that because the elements are present,
a visual consciousness taking a visible form as its object would apprehend both]

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\ ###
\ 308.
\ Only the form is visible
\ But the form's causes are not seen.
\ If indeed it is thus,
\ Why are both not also
\ Perceived by just the eyes?

.
(i.e. Even parts like the so called elementary components are not inherently existing, or directly perceived: We cannot use the assumption of the elementary components to prove that a form really exist on its own. This is circular reasoning; they are assume based on the resulting form. Those elementary components have not been proven to exist on their own. In fact it is easy to prove that they could not exist as such as done in a previous chapter.)

.
(-- An analysis of the relationship between the four elements and their outcome, visual form, is then made to demonstrate that they are neither inherently one nor different.

-- Assertion: The visible form source exists because the four great elements which are causal forms exist.

-- Answer ab: Only the resultant form is visible but the form's causes such as the earth element are not seen. Since causal form is imputed in dependence upon resultant form, they cannot be inherently different. If they are inherently one, they must be one.

-- cde: In that case why does just visual consciousness itself not apprehend both the causal and resultant forms? It follows that it should because they are one.)

.
L9: [c: Showing what invalidates this contention]

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\ ###
\ 309.
\ Earth is seen as firm and stable
\ And is apprehended by the body.
\ Only that which is tangible
\ Is referred to as earth.

.
(i.e. No possible direct visual perception of the elementary components: In fact the characteristics of those so called elementary components are based on their tactile sensation and have nothing to do with visual perception. So we cannot say we have direct perception of a form because we directly perceive those elementary components.)

(-- Earth is seen as firm and stable and furthermore is apprehended by tactile consciousness. Thus only that which is tangible is referred to as earth. Therefore since visible forms are objects apprehended by visual consciousness and the four elements are objects apprehended by tactile consciousness, they are different. If one accepts them as truly existent, they are unrelated. It would thereby follow that visible form is causeless.)

L9: [2: Refuting contentions of other sectarians]

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\\ ###
\\ 310.
\\ Since it was produced as something visible,
\\ It is of no use at all to the pot.
\\ As with the production of visibility,
\\ It lacks even the entity of existence.

(i.e. The case of the “visibility” characteristic: And “visibility” is not another directly perceptible, inherently existing elementary characteristic. This characteristic is also dependently arisen.)

(-- Vaisesika assertion: A pot is not visible by way of its own entity but neither is it not a visible object, since it is directly perceptible by virtue of possessing visibility, a separate generality.

-- Answer ab: This too is unacceptable. Has the pot come into existence as something visible through its own causes or not? In the first case it would follow that an association with the separate generality of visibility is of no use in making the pot directly perceptible, because it has come into existence as something visible through its own causes. For this reason the generality of visibility is not produced in relation to the pot.

-- cd: Further, a pot that has no connection with visibility and is not something visible lacks any inherently established entity of existence. Therefore the pot could not be either actually or imputedly directly perceptible as you contend.)

L8: [(b) Refuting that which perceives objects]

L9: [1: Refuting that the eye is by way of its own entity an instrument of looking at form]

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\\ ###
\\ 311.
\\ The eye, like the ear, is an outcome of
\\ The elements. The eyes see while the others do not.
\\ Certainly therefore the Subduer said
\\ The fruition of actions is inconceivable.

(i.e. The Middle Way about the sense organs: There is no inherently existing sense organs either. The eye is also composed of parts, dependent on multiple factors, the fruit of evolution or accumulated karma. It is not a perfect organ capable of true objective perception, of direct perception. All of its mistakes are proof of that. As everything is samsara it is based on mistaken assumptions, illusions, ignorance and accumulated karma. The emptiness of the sense organs, and of the objects of the senses, doesn't mean that they are completely non-existent, it only means that they are dependently arisen, not independent, not existing on their own. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination; one implies the other.)

(-- The sense and the process of perception are examined next. Confusing lack of true existence with total non-existence, the opponent argues that the Madhyamika presentation of the senses contradicts what was said by the Buddha about the eyes and so forth being the maturation of past actions. In answer it is established that although nothing can sustain ultimate analysis, since nothing is findable when subjected to this kind of investigation, our experience confirms the existence of our senses and other phenomena. Thus the Buddha's statements about the relationship between actions and their effects are in no way contradicted, since such statements refer to the conventional existence of actions and their effects.

-- Assertion: Because sense organs exist -- such as the eyes, which are instruments of perception -- directly perceptible objects such as visible exist.

-- Answer ab: Regarding the subject, the eye organ: since the eye perceives visual stimuli while other senses do not, it does not perceive visual form by way of its own entity, for like the nose sense organ it is an outcome of the elements. A demonstration of the valid reasons which invalidate the entailment is given below.

-- Objection: If the eye and so forth do not exist it contradicts explanations concerning the maturation of actions.

-- Answer: But even we do not refute that.

-- Question: Why is that not refuted?

-- Answer: We refute that things exist by way of their own entity but far from refuting the existence of all that is dependent arising, we affirm it in our own system.

-- cd: Although it cannot sustain investigation by the reasoning which analyzes suchness and though it is not established by way of its own entity, it is undeniable that the eye sees visible form and does not hear sound. Thus recognizing that the maturation of actions is inconceivable, one should accept it without applying analysis by reasoning. Certainly therefore the Subduer said that the fruition of actions is inconceivable. Sutra says:

~ The maturation of sentient beings' actions is inconceivable.

~ Thus this whole world comes into existence through causes.)

.

L9: [2: Refuting consciousness as agent]

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\ ###

\ 312.

\ Because the conditions are incomplete

\ There is no awareness before looking,

\ While afterwards awareness is of no use.

\ The instrument is of no use in the third case.

.

(i.e. There is no truly existing consciousness: As for consciousnesses of the senses, that is also a false assumption. There could be no such thing as a truly existing consciousness of a sense. This is also another co-dependently arisen concept. Consciousness of an object is happening after having labeled the objects, after having received all the stimuli, comparing with memory patterns, assuming a lot by filtering them though accumulated karma ...It is an illusion of something inherently existing based on accumulated karma.)

(-- Inquiry is then made as to whether the eye and the visual perception it induces function simultaneously or consecutively, ... ; if motion is involved, does it occur before, during or after perception?

-- Assertion: The eye and so forth are inherently existent because one experiences consciousness, their effect.

-- Answer: A visual consciousness does not exist before looking at a form, for prior to that the conditions which produce it are incomplete. Alternatively if it exist after looking at the form, it follows that the eye consciousness is of no use in looking at the form, because looking takes place before it exists. As a third possibility one might think that that which looks and consciousness are simultaneous. It would then follow that the instrument of looking would be of no use in the production of that visual consciousness because the two would exist simultaneously and would be unrelated.)

.

L9: [3: Refuting the eye as agent]

L9: [a: Absurdity if the eye travels to look at visible form]

.

\ ###

\ 313.

\ If the eye travels, that which is

\ Distant would take long to see.

\ Why are extremely close

\ And very distant forms not clear?

.

(i.e. Refuting another old hypothesis of direct perception by the eye. Now the hypothesis is that it is the light (radiation) that travels between the object and the eyes. And it proves that we are seeing only parts of an object and assuming the rest. This also applies to our so called elementary components of matter.)

(... and whether the eye goes toward its object or not ... If no motion is involved, all objects should be equally visible.

-- Assertion; The eye is the instrument of looking.

-- Answer: When the eye looks at a form, does it look after traveling to the object or without doing so? In the first case, if when the eye looked at a form there were motion of traveling toward the object, it should take longer to see distant objects. If the eye perceived through contact, why would the eye ointment and spatula, which are extremely close, and very distant forms not be equally clear? It follows that they would be because of being perceived through contact.)

.

L9: [b: Purposelessness if it travels to look at the form after it is seen]

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\ ###

\ 314.
\ If the eye travels when the form is seen
\ Its movement is of no benefit.
\ Alternatively it is false to say
\ What it intends to view is ascertained.

.
(i.e. Refuting another old hypothesis of direct perception by the eye.)

.
(-- If the eye traveled to the form after seeing it, its movement would be of no benefit, for though it does so to view the form, that form has already been seen. Alternatively, if it approached without seeing the form which it intended to view, it would be false to say it had definitely been seen, for it approaches what is to be viewed without seeing it, like a blind man.)

.
L9: [c: Consequence that all objects would be seen if the eye by way of its own entity
perceived form without traveling]

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\ ###
\ 315.
\ If the eye perceives without traveling
\ It would see all these phenomena.
\ For that which does not travel there is
\ Neither distance nor obscuration.

.
(i.e. Refuting another old hypothesis of direct perception by the eye.)

.
(-- To avoid these errors one might assert that it perceives form by way of its own entity without traveling. In that case the eye which stays here sees all of these phenomena: the close, as well as the obscured and unobscured. For an eye which does not approach the object there should be no difference between close or distant, obscured or unobscured objects.)

.
L9: [4: Consequence that the eye is an instrument of looking in relation to the eye]

.
\ ###
\ 316.
\ If the nature of all things
\ First appears in themselves,
\ Why would the eye not
\ Be perceived by the eye itself?

.
(i.e. There is no true direct perceiver because the eye cannot see itself: The old theories could not explain why the eye cannot see itself – it should if there were true direct perception.)

.
(-- If the eye were an inherent instrument of perception, its function would not depend on a multitude of other factors. In that case it should also see itself. None of the factors involved in the process of perception -- neither objects, sense organs nor their related perception -- exist inherently or operate independently.

-- Just as the fragrance of the magnolia or blue lotus is first found at its source and afterwards, through contact, on a sesame seed and so forth, it is the way of all things that their nature first appears in themselves. Since it cannot relinquish its nature even in relation to itself, if it is an instrument of looking by way of its own entity, why does the eye not perceive itself? It follows that it should since the eye organ even with the eye as its object cannot give up its nature as an instrument of looking. Yet valid cognition negates that the eye perceives itself. Thus the subject, the eye, is not an instrument of looking at form by way of its own entity, because it does not look at itself.)

.
L9: [5: Refuting a combination of three factors as the instrument of looking at visible form]

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\ ###
\ 317.
\ The eye does not have consciousness
\ And consciousness lacks that which looks.

\ If form has neither of these,
\ How can they see form?

.
(i.e. The theory of the contact between the three: the sense organ, the object perceived, and the consciousness of a sense, doesn't make sense when looked at in details. It should not be taken as an absolute truth; it is just another skillful means. Those three could not exist independently of each other nor be the same. They are also co-dependently arisen concepts. This is explained in more details in the Karikas.)

.
(-- Assertion: The eye alone does not have the ability to view form. The form is seen in dependence upon a combination of three factors.

-- Answer: Since the eye is matter it is not conscious of the object. Consciousness is not that which looks at the object. The form, the objective condition, is neither that which looks nor consciousness. How can form be seen by way of its own entity through a combination of these three factors? It follows that it is not feasible because visible form which is none of them has no ability to see.)

.
L7: [(2) Refuting truly existent auditory objects]
L8: [(a) Refutation by examining whether sound is a maker of noise]

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\ ###
\ 318.
\ If sound makes a noise as it travels
\ Why should it not be a speaker?
\ Yet if it travels noiselessly, how could
\ Awareness arise in relation to it?

.
(i.e. The case of sounds: There is also no direct perception of sounds; sounds are also not existing on their own, inherently existing, independently of anything else.)

.
(-- A similar investigation is then carried out in relation to sound and its perception. Does sound emit noise or travel silently?

-- Just as form cannot be looked at in terms of its own suchness, sound too cannot be listened to in this way.

.
When sound is heard, does hearing occur because it approaches as an object of that which listens or not? In the first case, if it approaches as an object of auditory consciousness, does it do so emitting sound or silently? If it travels toward auditory consciousness making a noise as it travels, why is it not a speaker, since like Devadatta it travels, emitting sounds? If this is accepted, it follows that it would not be sound. Alternatively, if it travels toward auditory consciousness noiselessly, how could awareness focusing on the sound be produced, since no sound is emitted?)

.
L8: [(b) Refutation by examining whether or not sound is apprehended through contact]

.
\ ###
\ 319.
\ If sound is apprehended through contact,
\ What apprehends the beginning of sound?
\ If sound does not come alone,
\ How can it be apprehended in isolation?

.
(i.e. The theory of the contact between the three: the sense organ, the object perceived, and the consciousness of a sense, doesn't make sense when looked at in details. It should not be taken as an absolute truth; it is just another skillful means. Those three could not exist independently of each other nor be the same. They are also co-dependently arisen concepts. This is explained in more details in the Karikas.)

.
(-- Is it apprehended through contact or not?

-- Furthermore, if sound is apprehended through contact with the ear organ, what apprehends the beginning of sound before contact occurs? It follows that there is nothing with which to apprehend it, since neither the ear organ nor any other does so. If this is accepted, it follows that it would not be sound. Sound consists of nine substances and thus since it does not come alone, how can sound in isolation be apprehended? It follows that smell and so forth which are inseparably combined with it would also not be apprehended, for according to you they must, like the sound, have

contact with the ear organ.)

L8: [(c) Showing the flaws of this contention]

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\
 320.
\
 While sound is not heard, it is not sound.
\
 It is impossible
\
 For that which is not sound
\
 Finally to turn into sound.
.

(i.e. There is no inherently existing sounds: it is dependent on many factors among which is the mind perceiving it, and its accumulated karma.)

.
(-- Question: What is wrong if the beginning of sound is not apprehended?

-- Answer: It would fail to be sound. Until it is heard it is not sound because, like smell, it is not the ear's object. It becomes sound when it is heard. If initially it was not sound but later became sound, it would follow that smell and so forth could do so too, but that is unacceptable with regard to permanent functional thing. Sutra says:

~ For instance, in dependence upon the strings and wood
~ And the hand's effort -- through these three together --
~ Sound is produced and issues from
~ Instruments like the vina and flute.
~
~ When the wise investigate and think
~ From where it has come and where it has gone,
~ Searching in the main and intermediate directions,
~ They find no coming nor going of sound.)
.

L6: [b. Refuting apprehension by mental consciousness]

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\
 321.
\
 Without the sense organs what will mind
\
 Do after it has gone?
\
 If it were so, why would that which lives
\
 Not always be without mind?
.

(i.e. There is no truly existing consciousness: As for consciousnesses of the senses, that is also a false assumption. There could be no such thing as a truly existing consciousness of a sense. This is also another co-dependently arisen concept. Consciousness of an object is happening after having labeled the objects, after having received all the stimuli, comparing with memory patterns, assuming a lot by filtering them through accumulated karma ...It is an illusion of something inherently existing based on accumulated karma.)

.
(-- Does the mind travel toward objects or not? What is the mind's relationship to the senses?

-- Assertion: The mind apprehends objects after traveling to them.

-- Answer: That is incorrect. Auditory consciousness does not travel to the object along with the ear organ, for the organs remain in the body.

-- Even if mind, such as an auditory consciousness, approached its object without the sense organs, how could it perform the functions of listening, looking and so forth, since like a blind person it would lack the ability to perceive its objects? If it were so, why would that which lives, i.e. the self, not always be without mind? When one investigates in this way by means of reasoning, neither sense organs nor consciousnesses have by way of their own entity the ability to apprehend objects.)
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L4: [B. Refuting true existence of that which perceives objects]

L5: [1. Defining the aggregate of recognition]

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 322.
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\ An object already seen
\ Is perceived by mind like a mirage.
\ That which posits all phenomena
\ Is called the aggregate of recognition.

(i.e. The Middle Way about the perceiver, perception and the objects of perception: There is no inherently existing perceiver, no true direct perception, no objects of perception existing on their own; but that doesn't mean that they are all completely non-existent, or that everything is completely from the mind only. There is no need for inherently existing perceivers, perception, and objects of perception to support relative perception based on accumulated karma and conventions. Their emptiness doesn't deny completely perception, the teachings of dependent origination, the Wheel of life, samsara, and the possibility for Liberation.)

(-- How does recognition, which identifies things, function if things do not exist inherently?

-- Objection: If sense organs and their objects do not exist inherently, the aggregate of recognition which discerns what is exclusive to them will be non-existent.

-- Answer: Although they do not exist when analyzed by reasoning, they are not conventionally non-existent (i.e. they exist conventionally, they are dependently arisen), for mental consciousness apprehends the exclusive aspects of an object such as a visible form which has already been perceived.

-- For instance, though a mirage does not contain even a drop of water, a recognition of water occurs. Likewise that which perceives the exclusive aspects of an object, a mental factor positing the exclusive signs of all phenomena is called the aggregate of recognition. Phenomena are simply posited by recognition and do not exist by way of their own entity.)

L5: [2. Refuting it true existence]

\ ###
\ 323.
\ In dependence upon the eye and form
\ Mind arises like an illusion.
\ It is not reasonable to call
\ Illusory that which has existence.

(i.e. Even the mind itself is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither – inseparability of appearances and emptiness, inseparability of the Two Truths -- dependent origination and emptiness. A flow of interdependence without any inherently existing entities in it. Like an illusion, but not a complete illusion. Dependent on the mind, but not from the mind only.)

(-- In each case the conclusion is the same: nothing is findable nor can be pin-pointed under such analysis. Yet events, objects and perception occur, arising in dependence on a combination of many different factors.

-- Objection: If the aggregate of recognition does not exist inherently, it is impossible to posit phenomena.

-- Answer. There is no such error.

-- Even though it does not exist by way of its own entity, mind arises like a magical illusion in dependence upon the eye and visible form. Any phenomena whose existence is existence by way of its own entity cannot be called illusory, just as women who exist in the world are not called illusory.)

L4: [C. Showing that lack of true existence is, like magic, a cause for amazement]

\ ###
\ 324.
\ When there is nothing on earth
\ That does not amaze the wise,
\ Why think cognition by the senses
\ And suchlike are amazing.

(i.e. The Middle Way: although things do not inherently exist, they are not completely not-existent (nor both together, nor neither). Their true way of existence is beyond all conceptualization, but meanwhile it is useful to see them as: empty of inherent existence, but still dependently arisen and functional. Those two – dependent origination and emptiness – are not in real opposition, separate, different, nor are they one. They are said to be non-dual in expressions

like “inseparability of appearances and emptiness”, “the Union of The Two Truths”, “inseparability of the three kayas or of the three Gems”, “the need to combine method to wisdom”, etc. Seeing this is true Nirvana. But, here, non-dual means: not two, not one. It points toward transcendence of the duality by directly seeing its real nature: not accepting it, not rejecting it.)

(-- Assertion: It is amazing to claim that the sense organs can in no way whatever apprehend objects and that visual consciousness is produced in dependence upon the eye and visible form.

-- Answer: That alone is no cause for amazement.

-- Although when analyzed by reasoning a sprout and so forth neither comes into existence from a seed which has ceased nor from one which has not ceased, [sprouts are produced in dependence upon seeds]. When to the wise there is nothing on earth which is not as amazing as magic, why should one think that recognition of objects by sense consciousnesses which do not have true existence and such-like are amazing, for this applies equally to everything.)

L3: [II. Showing that emptiness of true existence is like magical illusions and so forth]

\\ ###
\\ 325.
\\ The firebrand's ring are magical creations,
\\ Dreams, illusions, and the moon in water,
\\ Mists, echoes, mirages, clouds
\\ And worldly existence are alike.

(i.e. There is no direct or objective perception, everything is like an illusion: Everything is merely imputed by the mind, but not from the mind only. Like figures seen on a cloud, like swirls on the surface of the ocean. All empty of inherent existence, but still dependently arisen and functional. All perceptions are dependent on accumulated karma.)

(-- Thus all dependently arising phenomena are like the ring formed by a firebrand which is whirled quickly. Though the woman created through meditative stabilization and the dream body do not have true existence, they act as causes for erroneous attachment to the self. Although the illusory maiden conjured by a magician does not have true existence, she confuses the mind. Similarly the moon in the water, mists and echoes resounding from mountain clefts and caves give rise to a distorted perception of them as they appear to be. A mirage causes mistaken perception, and clouds in the distance seem like mountains. Worldly existence consisting of environments and living beings, while empty of inherent existence, is able to function. Understand that it is like these analogies.

Sutra says:

- ~ 1. In a young girl's dream she sees
- ~ A youth arrive then die, and feels
- ~ Happy when he arrives, unhappy when he dies.
- ~ Understand all phenomena are like this.
- ~ .
- ~ 2. Those who conjure illusions create forms
- ~ Of various kinds -- horses, elephants and chariots.
- ~ They are not at all as they appear.
- ~ Understand all phenomena are like this.
- ~ .
- ~ 3. The reflection of the moon shining
- ~ In the sky appears in a clear pool,
- ~ Yet the moon does not enter the water.
- ~ Understand the nature of all phenomena is like this.
- ~ .
- ~ 4. Echoes arise in dependence upon
- ~ Caves, mountain, forts and river gorges.
- ~ Understand all products are like this.
- ~ Phenomena are all like illusions and mirages.
- ~ .
- ~ 5. A person who is tormented by thirst
- ~ In summer at noon -- that transmigrator

~ Sees mirages as a body of water.
~ Understand all phenomena are like this.
~ .
~ 6. Although a mirage contains no water
~ Confused beings want to drink it.
~ Unreal water cannot be drunk.
~ Understand all phenomena are like this.
~ .
~ 7. Instantaneously in a cloudless sky
~ A circle of clouds appears,
~ But try to find from where they came --
~ Understand all phenomena are like this.
~ .
~ 8. Like mirages and smell-eaters' cities,
~ Like magical illusions and like dreams,
~ Objects of meditation are empty of a real entity.
~ Understand all phenomena are like this.)
~ .

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

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\ ###
\ Thus in the illusory city of the three false worlds
\ Manipulated by the puppeteer of karmic action
\ The smell-eater maiden performs her illusory dance.
\ Amazing that desire should chase a mirage!
.

(i.e. It is about directly seeing the real nature of the three inseparable worlds: All the objects of the three worlds (desire, form, formless; or body, speech and mind; or the seven consciousnesses, the alayavijnana and the neutral alaya) are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. There is no direct perception of anything. All perceptions are dependent on accumulated karma. Everything in samsara is like an illusion. -- Our goal is to follow a gradual path of more and more subtle methods and wisdom that will permit us to directly realize the real nature of the objects of the three realms, and their inseparability. This threesome purification of our body, speech and mind is what can lead us to the inseparable trikaya of a Buddha. Once we directly realize the real non-dual nature of our own mind, and thus of everything in the three realms, then automatically all attachments and fears are dropped off, no more karma is produced and we are free from any accumulated karma because we see its real nature. Then seeing the non-duality of everything, everything is seen as pure, the Buddha-nature is directly seen and it is true Nirvana.)

.
\ ###
\ This is the thirteenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on the refutation of sense organs and objects.
.

This concludes the commentary on the thirteenth chapter, showing how to meditate on the refutation of sense organs and objects, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L2: [Chapter 14 - Refuting Extreme Conceptions *[of inherent existence and complete non-existence ...]* – The perfection of wisdom: non-duality of dependent origination and emptiness - P.265]

-- *SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON THE REFUTATION OF EXTREME CONCEPTIONS.*
 -- *Refuting extreme conceptions.*

L3: [I. Proving that functional things are empty of inherent existence]
L4: [A. Brief exposition]

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\      ###
\      326.
\      IF A THING DID NOT DEPEND
\      ON ANYTHING ELSE AT ALL
\      IT WOULD BE SELF-ESTABLISHED,
\      BUT SUCH A THING EXISTS NOWHERE.

```

(i.e. Everything in the three realms is dependently arisen, thus everything is empty of inherent existence. There is no exception at all – not even for the permanent basic elements described in the Abhidharma, not even for karma, dependent origination or emptiness itself, not even for the Buddha-nature, not even for the a primary awareness. Dependently arisen means dependent on its causes and conditions, on its parts or characteristics, on the mind perceiving or labeling it, on accumulated karma. Empty of inherent existence doesn't mean complete non-existence; that would be jumping to the other extreme: nihilism. Nor does it mean both existence and non-existence together (dualism), nor neither existence nor non-existence (monism). Everything is merely imputed by the mind, but still not from the mind only. The Middle Way between all extremes consists of staying away from all extreme conceptions, thinking that any view is the absolute final truth, or rejecting them all thinking they are all useless (that is also an extreme).)

(-- The fourteenth chapter continues by refuting extreme conceptions of reified existence and total non-existence. If phenomena were inherently existent, they should be independent and findable when sought by a reasoning consciousness analyzing their final mode of existence, but they are neither. Emphasis is placed on the fact that ultimate or inherent existence is being refuted, and that this should not be misinterpreted to mean that things do not have valid conventional existence. The reason of not being inherently one or many is first presented concisely and then applied to refute non-Buddhist as well as Buddhist contentions, in order to establish that neither what is imputed nor its basis of imputation has true existence.

-- Question: If, like the ring formed by a firebrand and so forth, worldly existence, because of being dependent arising, does not exist inherently, what has inherent existence?

-- Answer: Not the slightest thing has inherent existence.

-- Anything existing by way of its own entity would not rely on anything else at all, but not the least thing is independent or exists without relying on something else. If anything existed inherently, independence would be established as its nature when examined by the reasoning which investigates the ultimate, yet this does not exist anywhere. A mode of existence of phenomena not merely posited by nominal convention is known as independent existence, existence by way of their entity, existence by way of their character, inherent existence and true existence. This clearly indicates the object of negation through whose refutation there is no focus for conceptions of true existence. Since Candrakirti's commentary repeatedly mentions qualifying the object of negation when refuting fabrications of true existence, one should not deprecate the Madhyamika view.)

L4: [B. Extensive explanation]

L5: [1. Refuting a truly existent composite by examining the four possibilities
[same, different, one owning the other or vice versa]]

L6: [a. Exposition]

\ ###
 \ 327.
 \ "The form is a pot" -- they are not one.
 \ The pot that has form is not separate.
 \ The pot does not have form,
 \ Not does the form have a pot.

(i.e. Interdependence of an object and its basic characteristics or parts: We usually assume there is a real object existing on its own out there, and that it has real characteristics that we can directly perceived. By analyzing the relations between the object and its characteristics with these assumptions we find that it turns into complete absurdity. Taking the pot and its form as example, we find that a pot cannot first exist on its own and then have a form that could also exist on its own. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts. So there is no inherently existing (independent) object or characteristics. Everything is dependently arisen, thus empty of inherent existence.)

(The pot and the form, not one, not separate:

-- The text first examine whether the pot and its constituents, like visual form, are inherently one or different. If they were inherently one, there should be a pot wherever there is a visual form. Alternatively, if the pot possessed visual form as something inherently different from itself, the two would be unrelated, and we should be able to see a pot without necessarily seeing its form.

-- If the composite known as "pot" exists by way of its own entity, are the visible form and the pot one or different?

-- In the first case it follows that the pot in the statement "The form is a pot" are not inherently one, otherwise there would be a pot wherever there was a visible form. One might think that the pot which is something distinct from visible form possessed form the way Devadatta possesses a cow, as something separate. However it follows that the pot which has form is not inherently separate from the form, otherwise it would be apprehensible independently of its form. The pot does not have form as something apart which depends upon it, nor does the form have a pot dependent upon it, like a dish and its contents, because neither exists inherently.)

L6: [b. Explanation]

L7: [(1) Refuting other sectarians]

L8: [(a) Refuting the characteristics]

L9: [1: Refuting the substantial entity as basis for a distinct generality]

\\ ###
\\ 328.
\\ Since the two are seen to have dissimilar
\\ Characteristics, if the pot is separate
\\ From existence, why would existence
\\ Not also be separate from the pot?

(i.e. The case of an object and existence: Another example of an object and its basic characteristics: "existence". A pot cannot exist or not then have the characteristic of "existence" added to it. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts.)

(The pot and "existence", not one, not separate:

-- In developing this examination of the relationship between the pot and its parts, the text investigates Vaisesika contention regarding the relationship between the generality "existence" and specific instances such as a pot. Here, the relationship between a substantial entity (a pot) and its attributes and the relationship between one attribute and another are also investigated.

According to Vaisesika contentions one would not be able to say that the pot exists because the pot and existence are inherently different and thus unrelated.

-- Vaisesika assertion: Though the pot and its form are not different substantial entities, existence and the pot are. The pot is a substantial entity and is said to exist through its connection with the great generality "existence," which is something separate from it.

-- Answer: Existence and the pot are seen to have the dissimilar characteristics of a generality and of a specific. It is not feasible for the pot to be a substantial entity which is separate from existence, for if it were, why would existence not be a separate entity from the pot? It follows that it would be. If this is accepted, the pot is non-existent.)

L9: [2: Refuting it as a basis for distinct attributes]

L9: [a: Actual meaning]

\ ###
 \ 329.
 \ If one is not accepted as the pot
 \ The pot is not one.
 \ Moreover possession is not reciprocal,
 \ Therefore also it is not one.

(i.e. The case of an object and its numerator: Another example of an object and its basic characteristics: "one" or "two". A pot cannot exist and then have the characteristic of "one" added to it. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts)

(The pot and "one", not one, not separate:

-- Neither could one say "one pot", since a substantial entity and its attributes, in this case the pot and one, are asserted to be inherently different and possession between them not reciprocal.
 -- Assertion: The substantial entity, the pot, exists because it acts as a basis for attributes, such as one or two, which are distinct from it.
 -- Answer: "Attribute" and "substantial entity" are different words and have different meanings.
 -- ab: If the number one is not accepted as the pot, the pot is not one either because, like two and so forth, these are different words and have different meanings. if this is accepted, the term and thought "one" do not validly apply to the pot.
 -- Assertion: The pot is one by virtue of possessing the attribute one, but one is not the pot.
 -- Answer cd: Possession occurs between two similar things, as in the case of consciousness, and not between dissimilar things. Moreover there is no reciprocal possession between the pot and one, since the pot possesses one, but one does not possess the pot. The pot is also not one because of being a separate entity from one.)

L9: [b: Inconsistency with the assertion that one attribute cannot rely on another attribute]

\ ###
 \ 330.
 \ If the form is the size of the substance,
 \ Why is the form not large?
 \ If the opponent were not different
 \ Scriptural sources could be cited.

(i.e. The case of characteristics of characteristics – like part of parts: As for the relations between the so called basic characteristics of the same object. If we assume those characteristics are really existing on their own – independently of each other – inherently existing, then it also ends up in much absurdity. Taking the example of form and size, a form cannot exist and then have the characteristic of "being large or not" added to it. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts. So those characteristics are more like parts and sub-parts, and not independent of each other.)

-- When we say a "large pot" we mean its form is large. According to the Vaisesikas, however, both form and size are attributes and one attribute cannot qualify another, with the absurd consequence that a large pot could not exist.
 -- ab: Furthermore, your contention that attributes qualify substantial entities but that one attribute does not qualify another is contradictory.
 -- If the size of the substantial entity, the pot, and the size of its visible form are the same, why is the attribute form not large just as the substantial entity is large? One must accept that the form has a separate attribute "large".
 -- Objection: Small and large cannot qualify form, for according to our textual system, one attribute does not qualify another.
 -- Answer cd: If your opponents were not from a school other than your own, you could cite your textual system to fault their argument, but it is inappropriate here, since we are engaged in rejecting these very tenets.)

L8: [(b) Refuting that which is characterized]

\ ###
 \ 331.

\ BY VIRTUE OF ITS CHARACTERISTIC
 \ THE CHARACTERIZED DOES NOT EXIST.
 \ Such a thing has no existence
 \ As something different from number and so forth.

(i.e. Emptiness of the characterized and of the characteristics because co-dependently arisen: So, the characterized is empty of inherent existence because dependent on its characteristics (numerator, form, color, size, existence, ...), like it is dependent on its parts. And vice versa, the characteristics are empty of inherent existence because they cannot exist without the characterized as shown above. The characteristics and the characterized are interdependent, one cannot exist without the other. They are not two, but still not one; not different or separate, but still not the same. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts, all merely imputed by the mind.)

(The characteristics and the characterized: not one, not separate, both empty:

-- Next Sautrantika assertions regarding the relationship between characteristics and what they characterize is examined.
 -- Assertion: Even if distinct attributes like separateness are refuted, the pot which they characterize is not refuted and thus exists by way of its own entity.

-- Answer: If one contends that existence and so forth have the characteristic of accompanying things while the pot has the opposite characteristic, then by virtue of this opposite characteristic the pot it characterizes does not exist anywhere by way of its own entity. Such a thing, distinct from numbers like one, two and so forth, has no existence as a pot established by way of its own entity. In brief, something characterized which is a different entity from its characteristics and characteristics which are different entities from that which they characterize cannot be found.)

L7: [(2) Refuting our own sectarians]

L8: [(a) Extensively refuting the composite as a truly existent single unit]

L9: [1: Refutation by examining for oneness or difference]

.\ ###
 \ 332.
 \ Because the pot is not separate
 \ From its characteristics, it is not one.
 \ If there is not a pot for each,
 \ Plurality is not feasible.

(i.e. The case of the plurality: If there is no "one" inherently existing object because it depends on its own characteristics or parts, then there cannot be "many" inherently existing objects, and the whole composed of assembling many empty objects (plurality) is also empty of inherent existence. -- So, the whole mathematical system is empty of inherent existence, but still not completely non-existent, or useless, or meaningless (that is evident by looking at its relative efficiency). So, we have to stay away from both extremes conceptions. -- see also verse 344.)

(-- The pot, for instance, is not a truly existent single unit, since it is composed of eight constituents with their own individual properties. Nor is it a truly existent plurality, since there is not a separate pot for each of these constituents.

-- Sautrantika assertion: The pot and its eight substantial particles are one truly existent entity.

-- Answer ab: It follows that the pot would be a truly single unit, because it is, by way of its own entity, one with and not separate from its eight substantial particles which have diverse characteristics.

-- Assertion: The pot is a plurality.

-- Answer cd: In that case there should be a pot for each of the eight substantial particles. Since there is no pot for each, the pot is not feasible as a plurality.)

L9: [2: Refuting the composite as a truly existent single unit through
 the coming together of its constituents]

L9: [a: Actual refutation]

.\ ###
 \ 333.
 \ The tangible and the intangible
 \ Cannot be said to coalesce.
 \ Thus it is in no way feasible
 \ For these forms to coalesce.

(i.e. The case of the whole: An object composed of different parts and characteristics that are themselves empty of inherent existence, is also empty of inherent existence. The parts and characteristics do not coalesce to form an inherently existing whole.)

-- The opponents argues that the constituents combine to form a truly existent pot. Yet how do tangible constituents such as the four elements combine with intangible one such as visual form?

-- Assertion: The pot is a single unit through the coming together of the eight substantial particles.

-- Answer: The pot's composite can in no way be a truly existent single unit due to the coalescence of the eight substantial particles such as visible form and so forth, because the four elements which are tangible, and visible form, smell and so forth which are intangible cannot touch and coalesce.)

L9: [b: Refuting the rejoinder]

\\ ###
\\ 334.
\\ Form is a component of the pot
\\ And thus, for a start, is not the pot.
\\ SINCE THE COMPOUND DOES NOT EXIST,
\\ NEITHER DO THE COMPONENTS.

(i.e. The whole and the parts / characteristics are not different, not the same, because the objects and its parts or characteristics are never the same, even if never separate or different. One cannot be found without the other, but they still represent different things. They are interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts. That is why both are empty of inherent existence.)

-- These constituents are merely components and not the compound itself. If the compound is not truly existent because it depends on its parts, neither are the components, since they too depend on their parts.

-- Assertion: Even though there is no mutual contact, their combination is the "truly existent" pot.

-- Answer ab: The pot's visible form is a component or part of the pot and thus, for a start, is not the pot, just as smell and so forth are not.

-- Assertion: Since a compound reliant upon components exists, that is the pot.

-- Answer cd: Since visible form, smell and so forth do not each have a pot, the compound pot does not exist by way of its own entity. The components, too, therefore do not exist by way of their own entity, because they have parts.)

L9: [3: Showing other reasoning which refutes the composite as a truly existent single unit]

L9: [a: Consequence that everything is a pot if the pot has true existence]

\\ ###
\\ 335.
\\ If the definition of form
\\ Applies without incongruity
\\ To all forms, for what reason
\\ Is one a pot and not all others?

(i.e. Another reason – form cannot be a true basic characteristic: When we say a pot has the truly inherently existing characteristic of “form”, then what makes it a pot and nothing else since everything has form. The fact is that “form” is not an inherently existent characteristics, it is just a fuzzy concept that regroup many different other characteristics, and so on. And because of this dependency, it is not existing on its own.)

-- If form is truly existent, why is one form a pot and another not a pot?

-- Why are some things that have form pots and other things that have form no pots? It follow that all should equally be pots, for if the definition that form is simply that which is appropriate as form applies without any incongruity to all forms such as smell, taste and so forth as well as pots and woolen cloth, truly existent things with form should be the same in all respects.)

L9: [b: Consequence that the eight substantial particles of the pot are one]

\ ###
\ 336.
\ If you assert that form is distinct from
\ Taste and so forth but not from the pot,
\ How can that which does not exist
\ Without these not be distinct from form?

.
(i.e. The characteristics are not the same as the characterized: Form is not the same as pot, no more than smell is the pot ...)

.
(-- Surely all forms should be pots, since distinctions would indicate dependence on other factors.
-- It follows that form, smell and so forth would also be one, because of being one with the pot.
-- Objection: Form, smell and so forth are different.
-- Answer: You assert that smell, taste, and so forth are distinct from visible form because they are objects apprehended by different senses, but that visible form is not distinct from the pot. Yet how can the pot that cannot be posited without taste and so forth, which are distinct from form, not be distinct from form? It follows that it should be, because the pot is different from form, smell and so forth by way of its own entity.)

.
L9: [4: Refuting truly existent production of the pot from its causes]

.
\ ###
\ 337.
\ The pot has no causes
\ And is itself not an effect.
\ Thus there is no pot at all
\ Apart from form and so forth.

.
(i.e. The Middle Way about existence: A truly inherently existent object cannot exist, but a conventional object do exist: A non-functional pot that would be without causes and conditions, and that would have no effect, would be as good as totally non-existent. It would not be perceptible at all. But the pot we know is merely a concept based on a valid basis composed of parts and characteristics. It is a conventional truth, empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen -- dependent on its characteristics and parts, on its causes and conditions, on the mind perceiving or labeling it, on accumulated karma ...)

.
(-- Since form and so forth are not the pot's causes by way of their own entity, the pot is not an effect existent by way of its own entity. Thus there is nowhere a pot that exists by way of its own entity apart from its components like visible form and so forth. Since a pot cannot be found isolated from its components, a pot which is a different entity from them does not exist.)

.
L9: [5: Refuting truly existent production by virtue of dependence on parts]

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\ ###
\ 338.
\ If the pot exists by virtue of its causes
\ And those causes by virtue of others,
\ How can that which does not exist
\ By virtue of itself produce something disparate?

.
(i.e. Emptiness can only produce emptiness – empty causes can only produce an empty result: An inherently existing object cannot be produced by empty causes and condition – that are themselves dependent on other causes and condition, ad infinitum. Everything is like that, and beginningless and endless chain of empty causes and effects. A flow of interdependence without any inherently existing entities in it. All empty but still dependently arisen and functional. That is the meaning of the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, the inseparability of the Two Truths, of dependent origination and emptiness.)

.
(-- A pot comes into existence through causes which require their own causes. How can anything which is produced in this way be truly existent?
-- Assertion: The pot is the effect of its components, such as clay, and they are its causes.

-- Answer: If the pot exists by virtue of its causes, and those causes exist by virtue of other causes, how can that which does not exist by virtue of its own entity produce a disparate effect? Anything, therefore, that needs to rely on causes does not exist by way of its own entity. If it existed by way of its own entity, it follows that it would be causeless. This reasoning which refutes the existence of a pot by way of its own entity should be applied to all effects.)

L8: [(b) Briefly refuting that though there are many components, the composite is a truly existent single unit]

339.
Though they meet and come together
Form cannot be smell.
Therefore like the pot
The composite cannot be one.

(i.e. Emptiness can only produce emptiness – empty parts and characteristics can only define an empty whole: the parts and characteristics keep their own individual parts, characteristics and functions. They do not become “one and the same” with the whole. The whole and its parts, or characteristics, or causes and conditions, are not different or separate, but still not the same. Not two, but still not one. They are interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts.)

(-- When the components retain their own particular properties, how can their combination form a truly existent unit?
-- Assertion: Though it has many components, the pot is a truly existent single unit.
-- Answer: Though visible form, smell and so forth meet and combine, form cannot be smell, for things that create the composite do not give up their different characteristics. Though form, smell and so forth combine they do not have one nature. Thus just as the pot as a truly existent single unit was refuted by the words [in stanza 332],
~ Because the pot is not separate from
~ Its characteristics, it is not one,
the composite too cannot be a truly existent single unit.)

L5: [2. Refuting truly existent components]

L6: [a. Just as a composite does not exist truly apart from visible form, smell and so forth, there are no truly existent elemental derivatives that do not rely on the elements]

340.
Just as the pot does not exist
Apart from form and so forth,
Likewise form does not exist
Apart from air and so forth.

(i.e. Emptiness of basic characteristics or elementary components: Even the most basic elementary components or characteristics we can imagine is also dependently arisen, dependent on its own characteristics, on what it characterizes, on other so called elementary characteristics or components ... There is no basic or primary cause that is not itself an effect, part that have no parts itself, characteristics that are not dependent on something else, or anything that is not dependent on the mind and its accumulated karma. Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.)

(-- The components themselves, for instance visual form, depend on their constituents, such as the four elements; the elements too exist only in dependence upon each other and not in and of themselves.
-- Just as the previously explained reasoning shows that there is no truly existent pot apart from form, smell and so forth, there is no truly existent component visible form apart from the great elements such as air, for it is imputed in dependence upon these.)

L6: [b. Refuting truly existent elements]

341.
That which is hot is fire but how
Can that burn which is not hot?

\ Thus so-called fuel does not exist,
\ And without it fire too does not.

.
(i.e. The case of the basic element of fire and its fuel: A fire cannot exist and then have its fuel added to it. We do not call fuel of a fire something that is not already in burning. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts.)

.
(-- Even elemental particles, when subjected to similar scrutiny, are found to depend on their parts and other factors.
-- Just as visible form, smell and the like cannot exist without air and so forth, the great elements too do not exist by way of their own entity without relying on each other. Thus fire is that which burns and the other three elements that which is burnt.

Fire burns only fuel whose nature is the other three elements, yet hot fuel is fire and no longer fuel to be burnt. If it is not hot, since it is unrelated to fire how will it burn? Thus fuel independent of fire does not exist by way of its own entity and because of this, fire independent of fuel does not exist by way of its own entity either.)

.
L6: [c. Refuting the rejoinder]

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\ ###
\ 342.
\ Even if it is hot only when
\ Overpowered, why is it not fire?
\ Yet if not hot, to say fire contains
\ Something else is not plausible.

.
(i.e. see previous verse)

.
(-- Assertion: Fuel is hard and so forth but not hot by nature. When it is overpowered by fire, it grows hot and is that which is burnt.

-- Answer: Even if fuel grows hot only when overpowered by fire, why is it not fire? It follows that it should be fire because it is hot and burns. Yet if fuel is not hot at the same time, it is implausible to claim that something else which is not hot is present in fire. In that case just heat divorced from the other three elements would be fire, but if one of the great elements does not exist the others cannot exist either. Moreover it contradicts the statement, "Things that arise simultaneously are reciprocal effects like the elements.")

.
L6: [d. Refuting a fire particle as truly existent fire]

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\ ###
\ 343.
\ If the particle has no fuel
\ Fire without fuel exists.
\ If even it has fuel, a single-natured
\ Particle does not exist.

.
(i.e. Even elementary particles are dependently arisen, and thus empty of inherent existence.)

.
(-- Assertion: Since the other three elements are not present in the smallest substantial fire particle, there is fire even without fuel.

-- Answer: Fire without fuel exists if the smallest fire particle does not have fuel. Since it therefore would follow that uncaused fire exists, one should not assert a smallest substantial particles as do the Vaisesikas. If one admits that even the fire particle has fuel, for fear of the conclusion that it would otherwise be causeless, it follows that there is no single-natured particle since the other elements are certainly present in each particle.)

.
L5: [3. Refutation by examining for singleness or plurality]

L6: [a. Refuting truly existent functional phenomena through the reason of being neither one nor many]

.
\ ###
\ 344.

\ When different things are examined
\ None of them have singleness.
\ Because there is no singleness
\ There is no plurality either.

.
(i.e. Emptiness can only produce emptiness – a grouping of empty objects can only be an empty plurality: see also verse 332)

.
(-- When functional things like pots and woolen cloth are examined as to whether they are or are not truly existent, these various things, because they have parts, do not have truly existent singleness. Nor do they have truly existent plurality for the very reason by which they are not truly single, since plurality comes about through an accumulation of single units. External and internal phenomena are not truly existent because they are neither one nor many. They are like reflections.)

.
L6: [b. This fallacy equally applies to other sectarians]

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\ ###
\ 345.
\ Though they assert that where there are none
\ Of those things there is singleness,
\ Singleness does not exist
\ Since everything is threefold.

.
(i.e. Even the smallest elementary component basis of the whole universe we can imagine is still composed of parts, has characteristics, has functions, is still part of a conceptual system, is still dependent on the mind conceiving it and labeling it, still dependent on accumulated karma, thus empty of inherent existence, like an illusion.)

.
(-- One may think this refutation applies to our own sectarians who assert that the elements and elemental derivatives occur simultaneously, but not to outsiders who assert that a small permanent earth particle which is a single unit exists where there are no functional things apart from the smallest particles such as earth particles and so forth. Yet even in their system the smallest earth particle is threefold in that it has substantial entity, singleness and existence. Attributes have attributiveness, singleness and existence. By virtue of the fact that everything is threefold even in their system, just unaccompanied singleness does not exist. Thus precisely the same fallacies apply to them.)

.
L5: [4. Applying reasoning which negates the four possibilities in [all] other cases [, with any duality.]]

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\ ###
\ 346.
\ THE APPROACH OF EXISTENCE, NON-EXISTENCE,
\ BOTH EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE, AND NEITHER,
\ SHOULD ALWAYS BE APPLIED BY THOSE
\ WITH MASTERY TO ONENESS [I.E. EMPTINESS] AND SO FORTH.

.
(i.e. The Method: the Middle Way: staying away from the four extremes:

-- Tetralemma: To stay away from the four extreme conceptions of existence, non-existence, both, neither – that is away from thinking that those four, realism, idealism or nihilism, dualism, and monism, are the absolute truth, the final view.

Because there is no absolute view, only adapted skillful means. Nirvana is not about doing something or not doing something, getting something or dropping something, seeing something or not seeing something. Nirvana is like space.

-- Another way to present it would be: staying away from the four extremes: thinking causes and effects are the same (self-causation), different or separate (other causation), ...

-- Another way to present it would be to say: staying away from the four extremes: thinking parts and whole are the same, different or separate, both separate and the same, neither separate nor the same.

-- Another way to present it would be to say: staying away from the four extremes: thinking characteristics and the characterized are the same, different or separate, both separate and the same, neither separate nor the same.

-- Another way to present it would be to say: staying away from the four extremes: thinking the world and the mind are the same, different or separate, both separate and the same, neither separate nor the same ... etc.

-- The same for the Two Truths, for dependent origination and emptiness, for appearances and emptiness, for body and mind, for stillness and occurrence, for samsara and Nirvana, ... etc. The same for any duality. For all dualities, all

opposites, all relations: one side doesn't assimilate the other (one being true and the other false), not are they different or separate (both being true), nor are they the same (both being false). They are all non-dual: not two, not one. They are interdependent, inseparable. – This is the method to apply to all problems.

-- All of these different form of presentation mean the same thing. All duality problems come down to the same problem of inherent existence. Resolving the problem of inherent existence (the perfection of the wisdom of emptiness) is solving the problem of all dualities, of all discriminations, of causality space and time, of the self vs the world, of the whole samsara (the perfection of the wisdom of dependent origination). And perfecting wisdom is to realize their inseparability. All problems comes from ignoring this real non-dual nature of everything. And Nirvana comes only from directly realizing this true non-dual nature of our own mind, and of everything, that is like luminous space – empty of inherent existence but still dependently arisen and functional, inseparability of appearances and emptiness, the perfect Union of The Two Truths. Realizing this emptiness, great compassion arises!)

(-- Those who have mastered the art of employing the meaning of suchness always refute oneness, otherness, both and neither by applying the kinds of reasoning which refute the assertions

-- of those like the Samkhyas who claim the effect exists at the time of the cause;

-- of the Sautrantikas who assert that cause and effect truly exist but that the effect does not exist at the time of the cause;

-- of the Nirgranthas who assert both existence and non-existence in that a thing is permanent in nature yet temporarily impermanent;

-- and of those who assert that though things are substantially existent, they neither exist nor do not exist since they cannot be said to be this nor that.

They apply the reasons previously explained in [stanza 265], "For those who assert effects exists ..."; the reason of dependent arising, the lack of being one or many, the diamond fragments reason and so forth.)

L3: [II. Showing the cause for mistaking functional things as permanent and truly existent]

347.
When the continuum is misapprehended,
Things are said to be permanent.
Similarly when composites are
Misapprehended, things are said to exist.

(i.e. The problem: Because we do not fully understand dependent origination we think it means that there are absolute causes and effects, primary causes like elementary components (internal and external) and relations or absolute causality, space and time. That is the way it is presented in the Abhidharma. But their inherent existence is not necessary to explain karma, dependent origination, the cycle of samsara and the possibility of Liberation (or any conventional truths like morality, laws, sciences). On the contrary they would inhibit any possibility of change, and this mistake still creates subtle grasping and suffering, thus keeping us in samsara. Everything is dependently arisen (dependent on causes and conditions, on parts and characteristics, on the mind and karma perceiving it or labeling it) and thus empty of inherent existence; everything is like an illusion; like a figure on a cloud, like a swirl at the surface of the ocean, merely labeled by the mind, but not from the mind only. And there is no reason to fear this because it doesn't mean complete non-existence, or nihilism. But this is very subtle, hard to understand and usually not presented to beginners as discussed above.)

(-- Through inability to understand the continuum of things or the nature of composites correctly, they are thought to be permanent and truly existent. However their lack of true existence should not be confused with non-existence. Things are like magical illusions, in that they appear to exist and of themselves, but actually depend upon each other. Inherent existence implies permanence which precludes the coming into existence of things in dependence on other factors.

-- Question: if things therefore do not have the slightest inherent existence, for what reason do those opponents hold that they are truly existent?

-- Answer: Though there is no valid reason, in the case of a thing which lasts three days, they feel compelled to assert that whatever existed before must exist later. Functional things are said to be permanent when the continuum which is posited through imputation upon former, intermediate and later moments is misapprehended. Similarly when the composite is misapprehended, it is said that there are truly existent functional things. There seem to be even many adherents to the "Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition" who, through not knowing how to posit the composite and the continuum, follow outsiders.)

L3: [III. Briefly showing the reasoning that establishes absence of true existence]

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\ ###
\ 348.
\ ANYTHING THAT HAS DEPENDENT ARISING
\ IS NOT INDEPENDENT.
\ ALL THESE ARE NOT INDEPENDENT,
\ THEREFORE THERE IS NO SELF.

(i.e. In résumé: everything is empty of inherent existence because everything is dependently arisen. Everything is empty of inherent existence but still dependently arisen and functional. There is no exception. And this doesn't mean complete non-existence or nihilism. Dependent origination and emptiness are not in opposition; one implies the other. They are two complementary antidotes pointing toward transcendence, toward the Union of The Two Truths, toward non-duality.)

(The middle way, not truly existent, not non-existent:

-- Objection: Even if our view that things exist were wrong, your view is that things do not exist, since you do not accept functional things. It is unreasonable because it contradicts both what is seen and unseen.

-- Answer: We make no claim that things do not exist for we are proponents of dependent arising.

-- Question: Do you assert that things are truly existent?

-- Answer: No, because we are proponents of dependent arising.

-- Question: What does that mean?

-- Answer: It means that while things are empty of inherent existence, like magical creations and mirages, they can produce effects.

-- Any relative thing which is found to arise and exist dependently is not found to exist independently. All these phenomena lack an independent mode of existence and thus there is no self of persons or of phenomena. The person and the aggregates do not exist inherently because they arise dependently.)

L3: [IV. Showing the need to understand absence of true existence]

L4: [A. Inherently existent dependent arising is not seen by the Exalted]

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\ ###
\ 349.
\ Things do not assemble
\ Unless there is an effect.
\ Aggregation for an effect
\ Is not included for the Exalted.

(i.e. The difference between Hinayana and Mahayana – the perfection of dependent origination: So the difference is that the Abhidharma teaches Dependent Origination assuming real causes, effects, causality, real characteristics and direct perception of those, real elementary components (internal and external), real space and time; only the self is not existent, merely conventional; -- while the Mahayana teaches Dependent Origination without any inherently existing dharma at all. It teaches that this is the only way to produce total Liberation, that grasping at the inherent existence of anything is still creating more causes for suffering. It teaches that cause and effect are interdependent; whole and parts are interdependent; characteristics and characterized are interdependent; even elementary particles are interdependent; that consciousnesses, sense organs, perception, and objects perceived are interdependent; that the whole world and the mind are interdependent; that everything is dependent on accumulated karma, and that ignoring this is the root cause of all suffering, while removing this ignorance is total Liberation.)

(-- Question: We too accept that effects are not independent, so what is the difference?

-- Answer: The difference is that you do not understand that dependent arising means mutual reliance.

-- Since nothing is produced by way of its own entity, things do not assemble and come together to produce an effect unless there is an effect to produce. Since anything inherently existent would be permanent, it could not rely on an effect. Aggregation for the sake of an effect is not included within the perception of the Exalted during meditative equipoise which sees suchness, because it directly perceives the lack of inherent existence of things.)

L4: [B. Release from worldly existence is gained through understanding emptiness]

350.
THE AWARENESS THAT IS THE SEED OF EXISTENCE
HAS OBJECTS AS ITS SPHERE OF ACTIVITY.
WHEN SELFLESSNESS IS SEEN IN OBJECTS,
THE SEED OF EXISTENCE IS DESTROYED.

(i.e. One has to realize the emptiness of all dharmas, without any exception: To really remove completely all grasping to the self, that is the cause of all suffering, one has to realize the emptiness of inherent existence of all dharmas without exception. Realizing the three marks: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and no-self is not enough. If one follows only the teachings of the Hinayana, and still believe in the existence of some basic components as described in the Abhidharma, then there remains some subtle grasping, and there is no total definitive Liberation from samsara. Grasping at any absolute, any view, any method, any path, is still grasping. But that doesn't mean we should drop everything right now.)

-- Only by understanding that things do not exist as perceived by conceptions of true or inherent existence can the seed of cyclic existence be destroyed. We should therefore make a great effort to develop a correct understanding of reality.
-- One gains release from cyclic existence when deluded ignorance which conceives things as truly existent ends. This depends on understanding emptiness of inherent existence.
-- The seed of worldly existence is the conception that phenomena are truly existent. Objects such as form are its sphere of activity. The seed of worldly existence is destroyed and one attains liberation by seeing that these objects lack an inherently existent self and by gaining familiarity with this. On becoming a Hearer or Solitary Realizer Foe Destroyer or on reaching the eight ground, one achieves the complete elimination of conceptions of true existence.)

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

All who have gained a free and fortunate human body,
Following the reasoning of Nagarjuna and his son,
SHOULD UNDERSTAND EMPTINESS TO MEAN DEPENDENT ARISING.
Who would not make an effort to achieve this end?

(i.e. The perfection of wisdom: The Middle Way: while one should not take Dependent Origination as taught in the Abhidharma as an absolute truth (with inherently existing elements in it), one should not fall into the other extreme and think emptiness is the absolute truth. – Those two, dependent origination and emptiness, form two poles of an apparent duality; so we could use the same treatment as for any duality as stated in verse 346. Dependently originated phenomena cannot exist and then be empty of inherent existence. Nor can something empty exist and then be dependently originated. Each of those two cannot exist without the other. But still they are not the same thing. One cannot possess the other. They are not different, not the same. They are interdependent. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts. Thus both dependent origination and emptiness itself are also empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. They are both conventional truths, even if emptiness is called the ultimate truth, or sacred truth. The real final truth is something else beyond any conceptualization. They are like two complementary antidotes, or skillful means. One fights nihilism or non-existence, the other fights realism or existence. This is the same thing as saying “we need both method and wisdom together all the time”. – We cannot say what is the absolute truth beyond conceptualization (so we say there is no absolute truth, only adapted skillful means), but we can say what it is not; and it is not Dependent Origination (conventional truths), not emptiness (ultimate truth), not both together, not neither or something else that those two. That is how we stay away from the four extremes conceptions. The final truth is beyond conceptualization, it cannot be described and has to be directly seen, but it is called the Union of the Two Truths, the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, the perfection of dependent origination and of emptiness where one realize their non-duality: not two but still not one.)

This is the fourteenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on the refutation of extreme conceptions.

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This concludes the commentary on the fourteenth chapter, showing how to meditate on the refutation of extreme conceptions, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L2: [Chapter 15 - Refuting Truly Existent Characteristics [of products] –
Production / origination, duration, cessation - P.277]

(i.e. *SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON THE REFUTATION OF THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES PRODUCTS.*

- Refuting the inherent existence of production, duration and disintegration, the characteristics of products.
- One of the argument used to assert the true existence of things is based on the supposedly objective observation of their production, duration and disappearance. It may also be assumed that things change into something else.
- But the exact link between the cause and conditions and the effect is not clear at all. They cannot overlap in time, nor be simultaneous in time. Why? Because they are both merely imputed by the mind. They are mental constructions, based on each other. So there is no stopping of the cause, and starting of the effect at all.
- There is no real production, and so forth, otherwise we would have infinite regress.
- When we say a thing is in the process of production; it is never absolute. Some conditions can change and there would be no final product as expected. So nothing is absolutely in the process of production; nothing is being produced.
- The process of production itself is unclear; it cannot be found.
- So the exact time of production cannot be found. And the distinction between past, present and future become blur. Why? Because there is no real production and so forth; it is merely labeled by the mind.
- So things are not produced from other things, nor by themselves, nor from non-things, ... And things do not change.
- The three characteristics of impermanent things (the product) are not real characteristics either. They cannot exist independently of each other, and of the characterized. Nor are they all the same. Neither simultaneous, nor consecutive.
- In general, the characteristics and the characterized are not different, not the same. Why? Because they are both merely imputed by the mind. They are mental constructions, based on each other.
- So there is no real cause, production, product. There is no real impermanent things with origination, duration, cessation. Production cannot be used as an argument to prove the existence of things.
- Nothing is before, during or after production / change.
- There is no real past, present, future. Why? Because they are relative to the existence of something real, and nothing is real.
- But, still, there is no effect without a cause.)
- (Assumption: Things exist and change; they have origination, duration and cessation. Because there is this inherent production, things really exist.)

L3: [I. Extensively establishing dependent arising which are not inherently produced
as existing in the manner of a magicians's illusions]

L4: [A. Specific refutation of inherent production]

L5: [1. Extensive explanation]

L6: [a. Refutation by examining whether that which exists or does not exist is produced]

L7: [(1) Reason refuting production of that which exists or does not exist]

\\ ###
\\ 351.
\\ How can the non-existent be produced,
\\ If what does not exist at the last is produced?
\\ How can that which exists be produced,
\\ If what exists from the outset is produced?

(i.e. *There is no inherent production because the effect cannot be existing, nor non-existing at the time of its cause. Examining whether it exists or not at the time of its cause. If they, cause & effect, exist simultaneously then there is no need for production; if they exist sequentially then there is no causal link between the two. So there is no real cause and effect as we think they are, there is no real production as we think there is. It is much more subtle than this.*)

- Inherent production of a thing is impossible, for neither that which exists nor that which does not exist at the time of its causes is produced by way of its own entity.
- Assertion: Products exist inherently because their characteristics such as production exist.
- Answer: Products would exist if their characteristics existed, but these do not exist inherently. If production is

asserted to produce products, then according to those who propound the non-existence of the effect, the sprout which does not exist at the time of the seed is produced after the final moment of a seed for which the necessary causes and conditions are assembled.

-- A sprout which does not exist during the last moment of the seed cannot be produced by way of its own entity, otherwise it follows that donkey's horn and so forth would also be produced. Thus how can anything which does not exist at the time of its cause be produced by way of its own entity? It cannot. How can anything which exist at the time of its cause be produced? It follows that it will not be produced, since anything existing at the time of its cause was produced from the outset, prior to being itself. The subject, a sprout, is not produced by way of its own entity, for neither that which exists at the time of its cause nor that which does not exist at the time of its cause is produced by way of its own entity.)

L7: [(2) Establishing its mode [of operation]]

.\ ###
.\ 352.
.\ Since the effect destroys the cause,
.\ That which does not exist will not be produced.
.\ Nor will that which exists be produced
.\ Since what is established needs no establisher.

(i.e. The cause and the effect cannot be sequential, not overlapping, because then there is no causal link between the two and it would mean that the effect is without any cause, that anything could be produced from anything else. The cause and the effect cannot overlap either because if the effect is already existing at the time of the cause what need is there to produce it again?)

-- Something non-existent at the time of its causes cannot come into being in and of itself. If it could, even totally non-existent things like rabbits' horns could occur, since they would not depend on producing causes. On the other hand, neither would something already existent at the time of its causes require anything to bring it into existence.

-- ab: Since the sprout cannot be produced unless the seed undergoes change, the process which produces the resultant sprout destroys the causal seed. Thus something which does not exist at the time of the seed will not be produced by way of its own entity. In general, even though a sprout which is non-existent at the time of the seed is produced, it is incorrect to accept truly existent production, for then one must also accept production of rabbits' horns.

-- cd: Since something which is established at the time of its cause does not need anything to establish it, that which exists at the time of its cause will not be produced.)

L7: [(3) Refutation by examining the time of production]

.\ ###
.\ 353.
.\ There is no production at that time,
.\ Nor is there production at another.
.\ If not produced at that time nor another,
.\ When will there ever be production?

(i.e. There is no inherent production because the exact time of production cannot be found: At the time of the cause there is no production yet; at the time of the effect there is no more production. And since those two cannot overlap or be separated, then when exactly is there production ?)

-- A thing is not produced while it exists nor while it is non-existent. Since there is no other possibility, how can production be truly existent, for when analyzed nothing is findable.

-- At a time when the sprout itself exists there is no production, since it does not need to be produced. Other than that, when it does not exist there is no production, since it cannot be produced. If it is not produced at that time nor at the other, when will there ever be production? There cannot be a time of production.)

L7: [(4) Refutation by examining the thing itself and another thing]

.\ ###
.\ 354.

\ Just as there is no production
\ Of that as the thing it is,
\ Neither is it produced
\ As something else.

(i.e. There is no inherent production because the cause and the effect cannot be the same, nor different. If they are the same there is no need for production; if they are different then they have no causal link.)

(-- Assertion: Milk turning into something which is curd constitutes production.

-- Answer: That is incorrect

-- Since something which exists as milk does not need to become milk, there is no production. Neither is that milk produced as something else, i.e. curd, for the two are different entities.

-- see Karikas 13 -- Nothing is being produced, and nothing is changing into something else. For example, when we say "milk changes into curds"; it is not milk that is curds, so milk has not changed. Like "milk becoming curd"; it is not "milk" existing as "curds". It is not the same continuing. It is about the duality "existence" vs "other-existence"; neither exist independently.)

L6: [b. Refutation by examining the beginning, middle and end]

\ ###
\ 355.
\ The first, intermediate and last
\ Are not possible prior to production.
\ How can each begin
\ Without the other two?

(i.e. There is no inherent production because origination, duration and cessation are not independent – they cannot exist before a product, nor exist independently of each other: A product is defined as having those three absolute characteristics: origination, duration, cessation. To be inherently existing those three characteristics have to be able to exist independently, on their own. But they cannot exist before the product; they are dependent on a product. And they cannot exist independently of each other because a product need to have those three to be a product. They have no real existence on their own, they are empty of inherent existence because co-dependently arisen concepts. We would never be able to see them directly contrary to what the Abhidharma say the Yogis can do.)

(-- Do the three characteristics -- production, duration and disintegration -- occur sequentially? They cannot, for they are simultaneous aspects of an on-going process, dependent on one another. Unless a thing has all three of these features, it cannot be a product.

-- There is no inherent production for the following reason too:

-- ab: First production, then duration and lastly disintegration are not possible prior to production, because that which is unproduced cannot have production, duration and disintegration.

-- Assertion: Production while a thing is being produced, duration while it lasts and disintegration when it disintegrates exists consecutively by way of their own entity.

-- cd: How could each at its particular time begin without the other two? Duration and disintegration are impossible without production. The same applies to the other two. Moreover a product is not feasible without any one of these characteristics.)

L6: [c. Refutation by examining both self and other]

\ ###
\ 356.
\ The thing itself does not occur
\ Without other things.
\ Thus there is no coming into existence
\ Either from self or from other.

(i.e. There is no inherent production because the cause and the effect cannot be the same (self-production), nor different (other production). Never has anything been seen to originate from self, from others, from both, or from neither. In the case of self there is no need for production. In the case of other, how could there be production; if that

was the case anything would originate from anything else.)

(-- Moreover inherent production is impossible, since things are not produced from themselves, i.e. from that which has the same nature, nor from that which has a different nature, for neither have inherent existence.

-- For this reason too products cannot be inherently produced:

-- The thing itself, such as a clay pot, does not occur without other things, such as clay, since it depends upon clay. The clay does not exist by way of its own entity either, since it depends on pebbles. Thus the pot does not come into existence either from self or from other, for since neither self nor other exist by way of their own entity, there is no inherent production.)

L6: [d. Refutation by examining sequentiality and simultaneity]

L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

\\ ###

\\ 357.

\\ It cannot be said to exist

\\ Before, after or simultaneously.

\\ Therefore production does not occur

\\ Simultaneously with the pot.

(i.e. There is no inherent production because those three characteristics cannot exist before, during, or after the product. The product and its production are two co-dependently arisen concepts..)

(-- Since production, duration and disintegration cannot be found to exist before, simultaneously or after that which they characterize, they cannot exist inherently.

-- Moreover there is no inherent production, since it is impossible to say that production and so forth exist before, after or simultaneously with the pot. Therefore the pot's production does not occur simultaneously with the pot by way of its own entity. If it did, since the basis and that which is based upon it would be co-existent, it would follow that the pot had been produced, for it must exist even as it is approaching production.)

L7: [(2) Refuting proof of inherent production]

\\ ###

\\ 358.

\\ That which was previously produced

\\ Was not old when first produced.

\\ Also that which afterwards has been

\\ Constantly produced is not old.

(i.e. No real duration or getting old: a product do not last and get old. As it conventionally get old it never stays the same, it continually changes. There is no duration of the same product. Nothing is produced and last. Nothing exist and change.)

(-- Even aging is relative, for a product constantly undergoes production.

-- Assertion: The pot's production exists, for without it there could be no oldness and so forth, but there is oldness characterized by cessation.

-- That is incorrect.

-- The previously produced pot was not old when first produced because at that time it was new. A previously produced thing does not grow by way of its own entity. Nor is that old which afterwards has constantly been produced, for also at that time it is new. Since afterward it is newly produced, it will not become old by way of its own entity. Furthermore, by refuting production existent by way of its own entity, oldness existent by way of its own entity is refuted, but mere [conventional] oldness is accepted in our system too.)

L6: [e. Refutation by examining the three times]

\\ ###

\\ 359.

\\ A present thing does not

\ Come into existence from itself,
\ Not come into existence from the future,
\ And also not from the past.

.
(i.e. There is no inherent production because there is no possible production in the present, the future or the past. The cause and the effect cannot be simultaneous, not sequentially in any order. Production is like an illusion. The product is like an illusion. The three characteristics are like illusions. All part of a conceptual system, an elaborate mental fabrications trying to justify inherent existence, and to control the apparent world.)

.
(-- Since there is no inherent production in any of the three times, production does not truly exist.

-- Since cause and effect are not simultaneous, a present thing does not come into existence from its present self. Nor does it come into existence from the future, not from the past. Moreover, since there is no inherent production in any of the three times, one must accept that production is false and like a magician's illusion.

Sutra says: "Monks, it is as follows: when the eye is produced, it does not come from anywhere, and when it ceases, it does not go anywhere." Thus if there were inherent production, a thing should come from somewhere when it is produced, like the rising moon, and go somewhere when it ceases, like the setting moon. In that case it would be permanent, but since production and cessation are mere nominal imputations, one must accept that they are like magical illusions.)

.
L5: [2. Summarized meaning: showing the effects of refuting production]

.
\ ###
\ 360.
\ There is NO COMING of the produced,
\ Likewise NO GOING of that which has ceased.
\ Since it is thus, why should existence
\ Not be like a magician's illusions?

.
(i.e. The Middle Way about production: Production / origination, duration, and cessation are like illusions. They are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. But that doesn't mean that they are completely non-existent. They are not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. They are dependent on the mind, but not from the mind only. They are like illusions but not total illusions.)

.
(-- Since things do not come from anywhere when they are produced nor go anywhere when they cease, why should external and internal existence not be like a magician's illusions? When dependent arising is seen as it is, it is like a created illusion and not like a barren woman's child.

At this point Candrakirti's commentary says that if mere production is negated, it is the kind of object of comprehension that a barren woman's child is and thus a denial of dependent arising. Inability to assert production in one's own system and placing hope in a system which claims production neither exists [nor does not exist] destroys the Madhyamika view. Since adherence to such an interpretation creates causes for bad rebirths, it should be discarded like a gob of spittle!

-- Production is not truly existent, but, neither absolutely non-existent. It exists in dependence.)

.
L4: [B. General refutation of inherently existent production, duration and disintegration]
L5: [1. Refutation of inherently existent characteristics by examining sequentiality and simultaneity]

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\ ###
\ 361.
\ PRODUCTION, DURATION AND DISINTEGRATION
\ DO NOT OCCUR simultaneously.
\ If they are not consecutive either,
\ When can they ever occur?

.
(i.e. There is no inherent origination, duration and production because they cannot exist simultaneously or sequentially: so when do they exist ?)

.
(-- Since production, duration and disintegration, the characteristics of products, do not occur simultaneously by way of their own entity nor consecutively by way of their own entity, when do they occur by way of their own entity? The

subjects -- production, duration and disintegration -- do not exist inherently because of not being inherently simultaneous or consecutive.)

L5: [2. Refutation through the consequence of infinite regress of the characteristics]

362.
If for production and all the others,
All of these occurred again,
Disintegration would seem like production
And duration like disintegration.

(i.e. There is no inherent origination, duration and production because otherwise there would be infinite regress: As product themselves they would also have origination, duration and cessation, and this ad infinitum. Infinite regress is not acceptable.)

(-- Since production, duration and disintegration would all require the production of production and so forth, disintegration, like production, would have another disintegration, and duration too would seem like disintegration in that one would have to assert that it has another duration. Thus there would be infinite regress. In that case the basic characteristics would not be established. Therefore there is not even an atom of inherent existence.)

L5: [3. Refutation by examining whether they are one or different]

363.
If that which is characterized is said to be
Different from its characteristics,
How can the characterized be impermanent?
Alternatively, existence of all four is unclear.

(i.e. There is no inherent origination, duration and production because they cannot be the same or different than the product they characterized: They are not different or separate, not the same. They cannot exist independently, alone, on their own, separate from the product. They are interdependent. They are co-dependently arisen concepts. And this is the same for any characteristics and its characterized.)

(-- Question: Are the characteristics and that which they characterized one or different in nature?

-- Assertion: That which is characterized namely a product such as a pot, is different in nature from its three characteristics -- production, duration and disintegration.

-- How can that which is characterized, namely a product such as a pot, be impermanent? It follows that it is not, for impermanence and the pot are inherently different. Alternatively, if they are inherently not different, the four, i.e. the three characteristics and that which they characterize, do not clearly have the entity of existing as functional things. It follows that the characteristics are not characteristics because of being one with that which they characterize, and that which they characterize is not what is characterized because of being one with the characteristics. One should therefore not assert that they are inherently one or different.

-- As characteristics of a characterized, they are neither one nor separate from it; none of them exist independently. Nothing "is" and is impermanent.)

L5: [4. Refutation by examining whether they are existent or non-existent by way of their own entity]

L6: [a. Refuting that production is truly existent because there are truly existent producing causes]

364.
A thing is not produced from a thing
Nor is a thing produced from a non-thing.
A non-thing is not produced from a non-thing
Nor is a non-thing produced from a thing.

(i.e. There is no inherent origination, duration and production because there is no way a thing or non-thing can be

produced by another thing or non-thing: I think it means again that the cause and the effect cannot be simultaneous not separate – this in the case of origination, and in the case of cessation. A produced thing is an origination; a produced non-thing is a cessation. A cause that is a thing is a cause that still exist (simultaneity) at the moment of origination or cessation. A cause that is a non-thing is a cause that do not exist anymore (separateness) at the moment of origination or cessation. So cause and effect (simultaneous or in sequence) cannot explain origination, nor cessation, and thus neither duration.)

-- Assertion: Production and so forth exist inherently because the agent of production exists inherently.

-- Answer:

-- The sprout, as an already existing functional thing, is not produced again while the seed as a functional thing exist, because a sprout is not produced unless the seed undergoes change. Also a sprout that has already been produced cannot be produced again. (simultaneity of cause and effect in the case of origination)

-- The sprout as a functional thing is not produced from a non-functional seed, because a non-functional thing does not have the ability to produce an effect. (cause and effect being separate in the case of origination)

-- Furthermore a non-functional effect is not produced from a non-functional cause: a burnt seed does not produce a burnt sprout. (cause and effect being separate in the case of cessation)

-- A non-functional effect is not produced from a functional cause since the fallacies already explained apply. (simultaneity of cause and effect in the case of cessation)

Since inherent production is impossible, causes and conditions giving rise to it are meaningless.)

L6: [b. Production and so forth are neither truly existent things nor non-things]

\ ###

\ 365.

\ A thing does not become a thing,

\ Nor does a non-thing become a thing.

\ A non-thing does not become a non-thing,

\ Nor does a thing become a non-thing.

(i.e. (There is no inherent origination, duration and production because origination and cessation are not self-caused nor caused by other: Very similar to the previous verse. Here the verb “to produce” of the last verse is replaced with the verb “to become”. It means a thing doesn’t originate by itself, not ceased by itself. When it change it is not the same, nor different. A thing does not exist and change.)

(About change: Something that already exists is not produced again, nor do its causes still exist, when it has been produced. The relationship between cause and effect and the function of production are then examined to establish their lack of inherent existence.

-- Moreover, should one consider that production and disintegration pertain to that which has the nature of a functional thing or a non-functional thing? Both are inappropriate.

-- Something already produced does not again become a thing being produced, since it is senseless for it to be produced again. (simultaneity of cause and effect in the case of origination)

-- A non-functional thing is not produced again as a thing, otherwise it follows that even a barren woman's child could be born. Thus there is no inherent production of either functional or non-functional things. (cause and effect being separate in the case of origination)

-- A totally disintegrated nonfunctional thing does not again become a disintegrating non-functional thing, for something non-existent like a barren woman's child does not disintegrate. (cause and effect being separate in the case of cessation)

-- A functional thing that is already produced does not become a nonfunctional thing, because the two are contradictory. (simultaneity of cause and effect in the case of cessation)

Sutra says: "All products and non-products are free [from inherent existence]. Those sages who do not have conceptions [of inherent existence] understand that which is a non-product with regard to all phenomena and are free from views of an [inherent] self.)

L4: [C. Refuting that what is in the process of being produced is being produced inherently]

L5: [1. Brief explanation]

\ ###

\ 366.

\ A thing in the process of production
\ Since half-produced, is not being produced.
\ Alternatively it follows that everything
\ Is in the process of being produced.

.
(i.e. There is no “being in the process of production” because there is no such thing as being half produced: So we cannot say things exist because we really directly can see their production. Nothing exist and change.)

.
(-- Assertion: Neither that which has been produced nor that which is unproduced is being produced. That which is in the process of production is being produced.

-- Answer: It follows that a sprout in the process of production is not being produced by way of its own entity, because that which is in the process of production must be posited as half produced and half unproduced. The produced part belongs to what has already been produced and the unproduced part to what is unproduced. There is nothing in the process of production with parts other than these existent by way of its own entity. If the produced and the unproduced are both considered to be that which is presently being produced, both past and future are also in the process of being produced. Alternatively, it follows that all three times are presently being produced, since all produced and unproduced things are in the process of production.)

.
L5: [2. Extensive explanation]

L6: [a. Refutation by examining that which is in the process of being produced]

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\ ###
\ 367.
\ That which has the nature of presently being produced
\ Is not in the process of production,
\ Nor is that in the process of production
\ Which lacks the nature of presently being produced.

.
(i.e. As something is conventionally being produced is continually change and is never the same from one moment to the other. Also the outcome is never sure. So we can never say that something is in the process of being produce. Nothing exist and change.)

.
(--If that which is presently being produced exists by way of its entity, is it considered to have its own nature or not? Both are unacceptable. it follows that it could not be the process of production.

It follows that anything which has the nature of presently being produced does not have the nature of being in the process of production. It follows that whatever does not have the nature of presently being produced is also not in the process of production, because that which is not presently being produced is contrary to that which is.)

.
L6: [b. Refuting the assertion that a thing existing between past and future is
that which is in the process of being produced]

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\ ###
\ 368.
\ For anyone to whom the two are
\ Impossible without an intermediate,
\ There is nothing in the process of production,
\ For it too would have an intermediate.

.
(i.e. So let's assume there is a step between the initial cause and the final effect along the process of production. This intermediate product also has its own production, its own “being in the process of production”, and its own intermediate step. There would be infinite regress again, and it would explain nothing at all.)

.
(-- Assertion: That which is in the process of production exists, since it is located between the past and future. These two times may be posited in relation to what is presently being produced.

-- Answer: In any opponent's system in which there is definitely an intermediate stage without which the past and future cannot exist, that which is presently being produced could not exist by way of its own entity, since there would be infinite regress, in that anything in the process of production would require another intermediate stage and that one yet another and so on.)

L6: [c. Refuting the assertion that a thing before it is produced is
what is in the process of being produced]

###

369.

Since the process of production is the arising
of the produced through cessation,
That which is presently being produced
Appears to be a different entity.

(i.e. An intermediary step, an object representing the half-produced final product, would be the cause of the final product. But, as shown previously, no inherently existing cause could be found anywhere. There is no absolute cause; it could always turn out to be something else because of an infinity of other causes and conditions. It is called a cause conventionally after the product is seen – and vice versa. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts.)

(-- Question: If the half-produced is not in the process of production, what is?

-- Assertion: "the 4 lines of this verse"

-- Since the process of production is, for example, the sprout's being produced through cessation of the seed, something in a state where its production has begun is said to be in the process of production. Thus what is presently being produced appears to be a different entity from that which is half produced and half unproduced.

-- Answer: If one could point to anything and say "This thing has been produced from this thing which is in the process of production," one could identify something in the process of production existent by way of its own entity in relation to the thing produced from it.)

###

370.

When a thing is produced there cannot be
Anything in the process of production.
If the produced is in the process
of production, why is it being produced?

(i.e. If it was sure that the final product was in the process of being produced then there would be no need to produce anything else from this step on. The intermediary step, as a cause of the final product would be useless because the final product would be sure to be produced because "in the process of being produced".)

(-- ab: However when a thing has been produced, there cannot be anything in the process of production which exists by way of its own entity, for what was in the process of production has ceased. A produced thing which has arisen from such a process of production and which would permit its inference does not exist.

-- Assertion: The produced is in the process of production.

-- Answer: "lines cd" + If the produced is in the process of production, why is it being produced again? This is unfeasible because it has already been produced.)

L6: [d. Refuting the assertion that the unproduced is what is in the process of being produced]
L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

###

371.

A thing in the process of production is said
To be the entirely unproduced arising.
Since there is no difference, why should the pot
Not be considered as non-existent?

(i.e. The intermediary step, the object in the middle, as a cause of the final product, cannot be the same as the final product, nor different. It cannot be the same because it is not perceived as the same, and doesn't have the same characteristics and effect. Until it is totally produced it is not the same. Nothing stays the same even for an infinitesimal moment. Nothing exists and changes.)

(-- Assertion: A thing which is presently being produced is said to be produced, for although unproduced, it is approaching production.

-- Answer: If a thing that is in the process of being produced is said to be produced because, even though it is entirely unproduced, it is approaching production, why should a pot while performing its function not be considered a non-functional thing? It follows that this is a reasonable assertion, since there is no difference between the produced and the unproduced.)

L7: [(2) Refuting the justification]

\ ###
 \ 372.
 \ That which is presently being produced,
 \ Though incomplete, is other than unproduced.
 \ Yet also since other than produced,
 \ The unproduced is being produced.

(i.e. So there is no such thing as being produced, unproduced, half-produced, and so on ... All of these are mere concepts attributed after the facts and based on mere conventions. There is no inherent production that can be directly observed.)

(-- The opponent argues that if neither that which is already produced and therefore functional nor that which is unproduced and therefore non-functional is being produced, what is being produced must be that which is presently undergoing production. To demonstrate that this too is not produced in and of itself, that which is in the process of being produced is next investigated. Is it identifiable as half produced or half unproduced? Does it already have an identity or not? Is it findable as something between the past and the present? Can one find anything, when an attempt is made in this way to identify the process of production and that which is being produced?

-- Assertion: There is a difference between that which is in the process of being produced and the unproduced. That which is in the process of production is said to be associated with the activity of production, whereas the unproduced is not necessarily associated with the activity of production.

-- Answer: Since a thing in the process of being produced is associated with the activity of production, you assert that even though it has not completed that activity, it is other than unproduced and future. Yet in that case, since a thing in the process of being produced is other than something produced, you are saying that the unproduced is being produced.)

L7: [(3) Necessity of accepting that the unproduced is being produced,
if that which is in the process of being produced is produced
by way of its own entity]

\ ###
 \ 373.
 \ That which is presently being produced,
 \ Though not yet existent, is later said to exist.
 \ The unproduced is thus being produced --
 \ But the non-existent does not arise.

(i.e. Until a product is totally produce it is as good as non-existent, but it is certainly not half-produced.)

(-- Since that which is presently being produced is other than something produced, you must accept that it is unproduced. You might claim that anything in the process of being produced exists as a thing, because, even though it did not exist previously, it has afterwards become associated with the activity of production. If on this account you say that an entirely unproduced thing associated with the activity of production is being produced, that too is incorrect. An unproduced thing, referred to as non-existent, has not attained its entity. It does not undergo production, because it is not engaged in that activity.)

L5: [3. Summarized meaning]

\ ###
 \ 374.
 \ The complete is called existent.

\ The uncompleted is called non-existent.
\ When there is nothing in the process of production
\ What is being referred to as such?

.
(i.e. The product is either existent (conventionally) or non-existent (conventionally), but there is no such thing as half-produced (inherently).)

.
(-- That which has completed the activity of production is said to exist as a thing, and that which has not performed the activity of production is said not to exist as a thing. If neither that which has nor that which has not completed the activity of production is in the process of being produced, what is being referred to as presently being produced? Anything in the process of being produced does not have the least existence by way of its own entity.)

L3: [II. Concluding summary of the refutations of inherent existence
[of production / origination, duration, cessation]]

.
\ ###
\ 375.
\ Since without a cause
\ There is no effect,
\ BOTH STARTING AND STOPPING
\ ARE NOT FEASIBLE.

.
(i.e. The Middle Way about production / dependent origination: there is no inherent production, no inherent origination, duration and cessation, because they are all dependent on other causes and conditions. Everything is empty of inherent existence because everything is dependently arisen – even production / dependent origination. Causes and effects cannot exist independently of each other. They are interdependent. They are co-dependently arisen concepts. There is no absolute (inherently existing) cause, effect, causality, production, origination, duration, cessation. But that doesn't mean that they are totally non-existent – or that we should drop right now the teaching of dependent origination completely. They exist as mere conventions, they are useful, they could be used as adapted skillful means. There is no absolute causality, but nothing is without a cause, and no cause is without an effect. They are dependent on the mind, but not totally from the mind. They are like illusions, but not totally illusions. They are like the figures seen on the clouds, or the swirls seen at the surface of the ocean. Everything is: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. Cause and effect, like the two poles of any duality, are not different or separate, not the same; not simultaneous, not sequential.)

.
(-- Through this investigation it becomes clear that causes and effects are interdependent, and that neither the arising of an effect nor the cessation of a cause occurs in and of itself.

-- Investigation by reasoning shows that there is no effect without a cause. Since cause and effect, then, do not truly exist and since the bases therefore do not truly exist, the sprout's starting to be produced and the seed's stopping to exist are not feasible by way of their own entity. Sutra says:

~ "Sentient beings, humans, those born from power whoever they may be.
~ None that were born and died here were born [inherently].
~ The nature of all things is empty like magician's illusions,
~ But the Forders are unable to recognize it."

For instance, the men and women conjured by an illusionist cause the spectators of the magic, who think of them as men and women, to feel attraction and aversion. Though they also appear to the magician, he does not think of them in this way. They do not even appear to those who are unaffected by the spell. You must understand that these analogies apply respectively to the perception of common beings who have not understood dependent arising's emptiness of inherent existence, to the wisdom of subsequent attainment of the Exalted, and to the mediative equipoise of the Exalted. You should learn how conventional phenomena are established by conventional valid cognition and ultimate truth by conceptual and non-conceptual reasoning consciousness from the presentation in [Gateway for Conqueror Children], Explanation of [Shantideva's] "Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds" and so forth.)

L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

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\ ###
\ PRODUCTION AND DISINTEGRATION OF COMPOSITE THINGS

\ ARE LIKE DREAMS AND LIKE ILLUSION.
\ When they are mere terms and mere imputation,
\ How could non-products be truly existent?

.
(i.e. There is no possible direct perception of origination, duration and cessation as taught in the Abhidharma; this cannot be used to prove the inherent existence of functional things, or the non-existence of others. This is merely another adapted skillful means. It is useful for beginners who do not have the requisites to be taught the subtle emptiness, but it should not be grasped on as if it was an absolute truth. Holding to this mistake would inhibit the full completion of the path and the attainment of complete Enlightenment. We need a gradual path composed of more and more subtle methods and wisdom; only then is it getting more and more in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything, and creating less and less cause for suffering. -- Things are not inherently produced, last, grow old, and then ceased and completely become non-existent. All of this is just like a magician's act.)

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\ ###

\ This is the fifteenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on the refutation of that which constitutes products.

.
This concludes the commentary on the fifteenth chapter, showing how to meditate on the refutation of that which constitutes products, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".
.

L1: [Section II - B : Showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students by way of [explaining] the purpose of the chapters and eliminating remaining counter-arguments by misguided opponents.]

-- Chapter 16 – Refuting Remaining Counter-Arguments – The dharma door of non-duality and the irrefutability of the Middle Way – P.289

L2: [Chapter 16 - Refuting Remaining Counter-Arguments –
The dharma door of non-duality and the irrefutability of the Middle Way - P.289]

(i.e. SHOWING HOW TO MEDITATE ON SETTLING [THE PROCEDURE BETWEEN] SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND STUDENTS BY WAY OF [EXPLAINING] THE PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTERS AND ELIMINATING REMAINING COUNTER-ARGUMENTS BY MISGUIDED OPPONENTS.

-- So the problem is seeing things as truly existent.

-- The opponents cannot prove their own theses; and cannot find arguments to refute Madhyamika.

-- Things are not inherently existing, but that doesn't mean that they are completely non-existing. They exist in dependence.

-- No thesis could be proven. All theses are flawed. -- Holding a thesis is believing something is absolutely right, absolutely truly existent, that in a polarity there is a right side and a wrong side. All theses are based on inherent existence, polarity, one of the four lemmas.

-- You can show the absurdity of a thesis, but never prove a thesis. -- Emptiness is a negation (of inherent existence) without affirming anything (emptiness of emptiness).

-- No reasoning, or analogies, can prove a thesis. -- Like, the reasons are to the thesis, what the parts are to the whole, what origination duration and cessation are to the impermanent things. They are not one, they are not separate.

-- The four positions are flawed. the Tetralemma: Although things are empty, they are non absolutely non-existent either. Things do not exist and then are empty. Things exist in dependence. --

-- This is not a thesis: Madhyamika do not advances a thesis of their own; they do not hold thesis that things exist, do not, or do and do not exit ... And because of that, no counter-arguments can be found.

-- Emptiness of emptiness: Even emptiness is empty of true existence, because its objects are not truly existent.

-- Emptiness of Dependent Origination: There is a flow but no chunks in it; no real cause, effect, causality. These are all concepts dependent on each others.

-- Beyond dualities: It is not about choosing the right side in a polarity. Both sides are dependent on each other; there is no right or wrong side. Taking side is choosing a thesis. All theses are flawed.

-- Beyond the Tetralemma: Since all four theses are seen to be flawed, one should not accept any thesis of true existence. Refuting those four positions is the position of the Madhyamikas. And because of that they cannot be refuted themselves.

-- Two skilful means / antidotes: Like: you can use "emptiness" to show the absurdity any theory based on the reality of something; and you can use "Dependent Origination" to disprove the theory that everything is non-existent at all. But none of them is by itself a final absolute theory. -- Seems like the idea is to use those tools (Emptiness and Dependent Origination) to destroy any positions based on the four possible theories (things exist, do not exist, exist then do not exist, something else).

-- The Union of both: Ultimately one realize directly that things are empty because the dependently originate, and vice versa.

-- No dualities, no differentiation, everything should be seen as pure: Since the polarity between existent and non-existent is flawed, in emptiness everything is equal, identical; there is no objective discrimination possible. There is no absolute right in opposition to an absolute wrong. Everything is relative, dependent. Everything could be used for the path. Obsession with right and wrong is the problem. But don't tell this to an unprepared mind.

-- Seeing the emptiness of one thing is seeing the emptiness of all things -- they are all equal, everything has the same ultimate nature, no absolute discrimination.

-- What good is it to perceive emptiness? : Thinking of things as truly existent causes one to accumulate actions and thereby wander in cyclic existence, but through fully understanding that all phenomena lack inherent existence, one gains release from worldly existence.

-- Only through a very gradual adapted path can one be lead to the realization of the true nature of the three: subject, object, action. It is not like acquiring ordinary knowledge, or building something through a precise absolute method. It is not something we can buy.

-- About the "mind only thesis" of Vijnaptivadin : They say that consciousness is truly existent, and that external objects do not even exist conventionally. This is shown to be wrong, for both are alike in existing conventionally but not

ultimately. So this view is neither a conventional view, nor an ultimate view.)

L3: [I. Briefly explaining the purpose of writing these chapters]

376.
For various reasons, that which is empty
Appears nonetheless as if not empty.
These are refuted individually
By all the chapters.

(i.e. The previous chapters have refuted the various arguments sustaining the belief in inherent existence.)

-- These chapters were written so that trainees may enter the state of liberation through giving up attachment to cyclic existence. Without ascertaining the meaning of emptiness as it actually is, one cannot develop enthusiasm for omniscience or even for liberation through the giving up of attachment to cyclic existence. The emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena frightens those who have not heard sufficient teaching and are bound by the noose of clinging to a self. As already described, the path leading to freedom from worldly existence should therefore only be explained after first making the mind ready, in the way that the death of a king's beloved queen was conveyed to him. -- Even though things are empty of inherent existence, they appear not to be empty and are thought of in this way for various reasons, such as considering them truly existent. All of the preceding fifteen chapters refute these reasons individually.)

L3: [II. Eliminating remaining counter-arguments raised by misguided opponents]

L4: [A. Refuting reasoning to negate emptiness]

L5: [1. Impossibility of refuting the thesis of emptiness]

L6: [a. Actual meaning]

377.
When the author and subject also exist
It is incorrect to call them empty.
Also with regard to these three, whatever
Arises in dependence does not exist.

(i.e. Even the three Gems are empty – even emptiness: All objects of the three realms are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. There is no exception at all. Even the three gems are empty of inherent existence, even the body speech and mind of a Buddha is empty of inherent existence. But this doesn't mean they are completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. They exist conventionally, as adapted skillful means.)

-- Opponents support the contention of true existence by pointing out that both the author, his subject-matter and the words he uses exist. Of course they exist, but not inherently as is claimed, because they depend upon one another. -- Assertion: ab. If the chapters were written for these purposes, things are established as not being empty, since the author and the subject matter explained by the fifteen chapters exist. "Also" indicates the words that express the meaning of emptiness. Therefore it is incorrect to speak of the emptiness of inherent existence of things. -- Answer: cd According to us, the words, subject matter and author are imputations dependent on one another and do not exist independently. Whatever arises in dependence does not exist inherently. Since the author, subject matter and words are all dependently imputed, these three also do not have inherent existence. Thus emptiness is well established.)

L6: [b. Refutation by virtue of parity]

378.
If through flaws concerning emptiness
[Things] were established as not empty,
Why would emptiness not be established
Through flaws concerning lack of emptiness?

(i.e. The meaning of the emptiness of emptiness: It is not because the dharma of emptiness is also empty of inherent existence, as stated in the previous verse, that everything else is inherently existing. Emptiness is a conventional truth, an antidote, introduced to fight other illusions. But once all other illusions are seen for what they really are, there is no more need for the antidote, emptiness.)

-- One can only refute another's thesis by convincingly establishing one's own, but the arguments advanced by the opponents to establish their theses remain as unproven as the theses themselves.

-- Assertion: If all of these were empty, the senses and their objects would be like donkeys' horns! But since they exist, things do exist inherently.

-- Answer: If on account of the [presumed] flaws concerning proof of emptiness, the words and so forth were not empty because one has to accept their existence, why would emptiness not be established through flaws concerning your proof that things are not empty? It follows that you should certainly accept emptiness because you accept the interdependence of the words and so forth.)

L5: [2. Impossibility of proving the thesis of non-emptiness]

L6: [a. Actual meaning]

\\ ###
\\ 379.
\\ In refuting the thesis of others
\\ And in proving your own thesis,
\\ If on the one hand you like to disprove,
\\ Why do you not like to prove?

(i.e. All views are flawed: It is impossible to prove any view, any theory. Why? Because any view is necessarily based on the inherent existence of something, and this can be disproved.)

(The opponents try to disprove the Madhyamika position without being able to prove their own positions.

-- You cannot establish your own thesis merely by dismissing the proponents of emptiness.

-- Opponents asserting that things exist truly must refute the others' thesis of emptiness as well as prove their own thesis that things are truly existent. You, however, are simply engaged in dismissing the proponents of emptiness. If on the one hand you like disproving the thesis of others, why do you not like proving your own? You should! To proponents of emptiness whatever proofs you adduce to validate your own thesis remain as unestablished as that which is to be proved. You should therefore give up adherence to the thesis that things are inherently existent.)

L6: [b. Refuting the justification]

\\ ###
\\ 380.
\\ When thoroughly investigated,
\\ The non-existent is not a thesis.
\\ Then all three, such as oneness,
\\ Also are not theses.

(i.e. The Middle Way consist of staying away from all four extremes, from any absolute view, like thinking things are truly inherently existent (realism), completely non-existent (idealism or nihilism), both existent and non-existent (dualism), neither existent nor non-existent (something else than the two, monism or Oneness). None of those four philosophical position can be proven; none is the absolute truth. In other words: Emptiness is not it. Dependent origination is not it. Both together is not it. And it is not something else either. The real nature of everything is beyond any of those views, system, concepts, antidotes. To affirm an absolute truth is necessarily wrong; any system presenting itself as having the absolute truth is necessarily wrong, and can be disproved.)

(All theses are flawed, the Tetralemma:

-- Assertion ab: The thesis put forward by proponents of emptiness is not feasible since when thoroughly investigated, it is illogical. Something which does not exist as a knowable object is not an assertable thesis. Therefore the thesis put forward by proponents of true existence is established.

-- Answer: No thesis is feasible when investigated by the reasoning that analyzes the ultimate.

-- cd: Since negated by this reasoning, truly existent oneness, otherness and ineffability asserted by any opponent are also not theses. Therefore one should not assert even the slightest true existence.)

L5: [3. Refuting other reasoning]

L6: [a. Invalidity of negating emptiness of true existence by reason of direct perception]

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 381.
\
 Where a pot is directly perceptible,
\
 The argument of emptiness is meaningless.
\
 Here reasons appearing in textual systems
\
 Are not [acceptable]; elsewhere they are.

.
(i.e. It is not because it is written in the Abhidharma that it is absolutely true: We have already shown that it is absurd to pretend that one can have a direct perception of an object. So the teachings on this subject in the Abhidharma should not be taken as absolute, but merely as adapted skillful means for those not ready for the subtle emptiness, as provisional truths requiring further interpretation. They are not definitive truths like taught in the Heart of Wisdom Sutras, or in the teachings of Nagarjuna and his disciples.)

.
(-- Assertion ab: The reason proving the pot empty of true existence is meaningless and ineffectual, for wherever there is a directly perceptible pot, that truly existent pot is, according to us, established by direct perception.
-- Answer cd: In relation to the thesis of proponents establishing emptiness of true existence through reasoning, reasons appearing in their opponents' textual systems are unacceptable, because they are engaged in rejecting them.
-- Question: Then are reasons from these textual systems inappropriate in all cases?
-- Answer: Elsewhere there is no incompatibility, since they pertain where both protagonists' tenets are similar.)

L6: [b. Since emptiness exists, its opposite, true existence, is not feasible]

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 382.
\
 When there is nothing that is not empty,
\
 How can emptiness be so?
\
 When the one does not exist,
\
 Why should the antidote exist?

.
(i.e. Even emptiness is a mere temporary adapted skillful means: Emptiness is the antidote to inherent existence (realism), like Dependent Origination is the antidote to complete non-existence (nihilism). But none of them is the final absolute truth. Once one has completely eradicated the belief in inherent existence, there is no more need for its antidote. The same for dependent origination.)

.
(Emptiness is not a characteristic of something really existing:
-- As part of a final refutation of extreme views, the fact that even emptiness lacks true existence is emphasized. If Madhyamika asserted that emptiness were truly existent, the phenomena which act as its basis would necessarily also be truly existent. However since no such assertion is made, how can these phenomena have true existence?
-- Assertion: You proponents of emptiness accept the entity of emptiness, and since emptiness is not feasible unless it relies on non-emptiness, things are truly existent.
-- Answer: It follows that the existence of emptiness does not establish its opposite, that there is true existence.
-- If emptiness were truly existent, truly existent things as its basis would be feasible, but as there is nothing that is not empty of true existence, how can emptiness be truly existent? Its basis cannot possibly be truly existent. Why, when the basis does not have true existence, would the antidote negating it be truly existent? For emptiness to be truly existent, its basis would have to have a truly existent nature. Fundamental Wisdom says:
~ If the slightest thing were not empty
~ Emptiness would have some existence
and so forth. The Two Truths says:
~ Since the object of negation is non-existent,
~ The negation clearly does not exist as [its own] reality.)

L4: [B. Refuting adherence to theses which fall into extremes]

L5: [1. Actual refutation – [the dharma door of non-duality]]

L6: [a. Refuting that the non-thesis is a thesis]

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 383.
\
 If there were a thesis, absence of the thesis
\
 Would in entity be a thesis,
\
 But where there is no thesis
\
 What can be the counter-thesis?
.

(i.e. Transcending all dualities: Let's consider the duality Dependent Origination (based on inherently existing causes, effects, causality, particles, space, time, ...) and Emptiness (the negation of their inherent existence). Facing such duality (thesis and counter-thesis) some say that necessarily one is true and the other false, others might say that both are true, or that none of them is true, that it is something else that would include the opposites, a big One. Those are the four usual positions in relation to the polarity in any duality. These four positions corresponds to the usual Tetralemma. The solution presented here points toward the transcendence of the duality: not taking one side as true and rejecting the other, not taking both sides together, not rejecting both sides. And this is done by realizing the real nature of the duality, that there is no real opposition, that it is just an illusion. For example, between existence and non-existence, the solution is : not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither. That is staying away from the four usual extremes; that is the Middle Way. As for this real nature of the duality of existence and non-existence, it has to be directly seen beyond all conceptualization. – In the case of thesis (emptiness) and counter-thesis (inherent existence or Dependent Origination as taught in the Abhidharma), one has to realize that both poles are empty of inherent existence because co-dependently arisen concepts. This permits to transcend the duality. This could be applied to any dualities, to any dharma in the three realms.)

(About the thesis polarity: The opponent say that thesis are in polarity, if one is proven false, then the other must be true. But, both side, and the polarity itself, are illusions. If one side could be proven as truly existent, then the other one would be proven as existent, but none can be proven as truly existent. Each side cannot exist on its own, independent of the other side. In dualities, it is never one, nor the another, nor both, nor neither. -- So, even if emptiness is not an absolutely true absolute thesis, having its own absurdity, it does not prove that "existence" is a valid thesis. Both are dependent.

-- This is followed by a summary of various refutations of true existence introduced in previous chapters.

-- Assertion: Since there is not even the slightest emptiness, it cannot constitute one's thesis. Nevertheless by accepting the absence of a system of one's own as one's system, one is asserting a thesis. Since there is no thesis which does not depend on a counter-thesis, truly existent things—the counter-thesis—exist.

-- Answer: If we had any thesis of existence by way of a thing's own entity, the absence of a thesis would in entity be a thesis existent by way of its own entity. However since we do not have any thesis of existence byway of a thing's own entity, a counter-thesis dependent upon that is also impossible. Moreover all theses concerning truly existent things have already been refuted above. Thus if the absence of a thesis does not exist by way of its own entity, what truly existent thing could constitute the counter-thesis? Neither thesis nor counter-thesis have even an atom of true existence. By this we refute truly existent emptiness as our system, which should not, however, be interpreted as showing that we have no system.)

L6: [b. Refuting proof that there are truly existent things]

L7: [(1) It is not feasible that there is true existence on the grounds that
specific functional things are truly existent]

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 384.
\
 How can fire be hot,
\
 When things do not exist?
\
 This was refuted above: it was said
\
 That even hot fire does not exist.
.

(i.e. Even elementary components are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen: this was covered above.)

(-- When one examines how fire exists, whether a thing and its parts are inherently one or different or how particles exist, one finds that nothing is truly existent but that everything depends on other factors. -- see Stanza 341

-- Assertion: There are truly existent things, because specific things like fire and so forth exist.

-- Answer: How can fire be hot by way of its own entity? It cannot, for there are no truly existent things. Above it was said that even hot fire does not exist inherently.

[Stanza 341] says:

- ~ That which is hot is fire but how
- ~ Can that burn which is not hot?
- ~ Thus so-called fuel does not exist,
- ~ And without it fire too does not.
- ~ This point has already been refuted.)

L7: [(2) Refuting the four extremes by reasoning]

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 385.
 If through seeing things one could refute
 The statement that things do not exist,
 Who then sees the elimination
 Of fallacies regarding ALL FOUR THESES.

.
(i.e. The Middle Way about the Tetralemma: Tetralemma: There are four usual positions regarding existence: existence, non-existence, both, neither. There is no other possibility. None is the final view, the absolute truth. But they are antidotes to each other. Existence (or Dependent Origination) is the antidote to non-existence (nihilism or too much Emptiness). Emptiness is the antidote to existence (realism or too much Dependent Origination). Dualism and Oneness are antidotes to each other. The Middle Way consists of not accepting any of those four extremes as an absolute, an not rejecting them as if completely useless, meaningless – they could be used as adapted skillful means depending on the immediate problem. We have no choice, we cannot use the real absolute truth right now because it is beyond conceptualization, and we have not directly realized it yet. But when this will be done we would have transcended all of those dualities, all views and will need no more antidotes. Until then we need to use both method and wisdom together without falling into either of them. This could be applied to any dualities, to any dharma in the three realms.)

.
(-- Moreover, even if, one seeing the thing which is fire, it were appropriate to refute the statement that fire does not exist truly, who sees the elimination of fallacies associated with the true existence of oneness and difference and of all four theses such as existence and non-existence and so forth exposed by the reasoning of dependent arising? Since all four theses are seen to be flawed, one should not accept any thesis of true existence. – see verse 346)

L7: [(3) Not even the smallest particle of true existence can be observed]

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 386.
 When there is nowhere, even in particles,
 A truly existent entity, how can it occur?
 Even for Buddhas, it does not exist.
 Thus it is irrelevant.

.
(i.e. Emptiness of everything means no inherent production: Using the methods described above we come to the conclusion that everything is empty of inherent existence. How can there be inherently production of anything then, as described in the teaching of Dependent Origination in the Abhidharma. There is conventional dependent origination, but there is no inherent cause, effect, causality, particles, space, time, etc. There is conventional production, but no inherent production. All productions are like illusions. – When Dependent Origination and Emptiness are correctly understood, there is no more opposition between the two as perceived by the opponents here. In fact, one implies the other. They are interdependent, and both empty of inherent existence. That is how this duality is transcended. When perfectly understood by a single mind it is called the Perfect Union of The Two truths. Then one is a Buddha.)

.
(-- When one examines how fire exists, whether a thing and its parts are inherently one or different or how particles exist, one finds that nothing is truly existent but that everything depends on other factors.

-- For the following reason, too, it is incorrect to assert true existence:

-- As explained in the context of [stanza 305],

- ~ This also applies when one examines

~ Whether particles have parts.

If there were a truly existent entity, it should be observable even in extremely small things such as particles, but it is not observable. How can truly existent production occur for that which does not exist anywhere? It is totally incorrect to accept as existent that which is non-existent to the perception of Buddhas, the sun-like radiance of whose consummate understanding of the suchness of things dispels all darkness of ignorance. Asserting true existence is thus unrelated to any feasible thesis.)

L6: [c. Showing that everything is equally free from extremes]

L7: [(1) Actual meaning]

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 387.
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 If they are not twofold, how can
\
 Anything have an existent entity?
\
 If that is reasonable to you also,
\
 Why raise further arguments?

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(i.e. The duality existence and non-existence is itself an illusion. We could apply the treatment described above (V.383) to solve the opposition in the duality of existence and non-existence itself. We then find that existence and non-existence cannot exist one without the other, and they cannot exist together as two separate entities. They are interdependent, two co-dependently arisen concepts. Meaning that everything is: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. The real nature of everything is beyond this duality, beyond all conceptualization. – But realizing the real nature of this duality it is easy to generalize the emptiness of inherent existence to everything that is thought to be inherently existent, or inherently non-existent, ...)

.
(Since the duality [existent, non existent] is flawed:

-- If there is no twofold division into truly existent and not truly existent, what, such as particles and so forth, could have a truly existent entity, since all forms of true existence have been precluded? If for the very reasons we have explained, it is appropriate for you to accept the system which has eliminated the two extremes, why do you cling to the thesis of true existence and raise further arguments against us?)

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L7: [(2) Inappropriateness of asserting differentiation of truly existent
and not truly existent with regard to any phenomenon]

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 388.
\
 Regarding the non-functional [aspect] of all things,
\
 Differentiation are inappropriate.
\
 That which is seen in all substantial entities
\
 Is not differentiable.

.
(i.e. No absolute basis for discrimination – everything is already equal & pure: Since everything is empty of inherent existence (there is no real existence I the duality existence vs non-existence), there is no absolute basis for discrimination. All criteria of differentiation are relative to an infinity of causes and conditions, among which is the very mind making the choices, and its accumulated karma. There is no impartial direct perception of any absolute characteristics or objects. All dualities like pure-impure, good-bad, desirable-not-desirable, stillness-occurrence, are illusions that need to be transcended. So, in that sense, everything is already pure. There is nothing to do or not do, nothing to get or drop, nothing to directly see or not see. Nirvana is not caused or produced through our own effort, or not. We already have the Buddha-nature.

¢-- *No absolute basis for non-discrimination – everything exist conventionally: On the other hand, because those are not completely non-existent either (there is no real non-existence in the duality existence vs non-existence), we should think everything is the same, not drop all discrimination, do nothing, drop all paths. That would be like killing ourselves; we cannot escape samsara like that. They do exist conventionally, and are still dependently arisen and functional. There is still Dependent Origination, the Wheel of Life, karma formation and its consequences; they are just not inherently existent or absolute.*

¢-- *The Middle Way in discrimination: Everything is not different, not the same; non-dual: not two, not one.)*

.
(-- From the point of view of their fundamental nature, there are no distinctions among phenomena, for everything is

equally empty of true existence.

-- If any reasoning could disprove the thesis concerning emptiness of true existence, we would be convinced, but since things cannot be proved truly existent, you should accept only our thesis.

-- If the nature of internal and external things were truly existent, they would not depend on causes and conditions. Also differentiations of truly existent and not truly existent are inappropriate with regard to the absence of truly existent things. There are no differences in the entity of space, because it is a mere absence of obstructing form. Similarly regarding emptiness of true existence, the nature seen in all substantial entities, [stanza 191] says:

~ Whoever sees one thing,

~ Is said to see all.

~ That which is the emptiness of one

~ Is the emptiness of all.

-- Sutra says, "Whoever has come to know the non-functional with regard to functional things has no attachment to functional things." There are no distinctions of truly existent and not truly existent with regard to any phenomenon whatsoever.)

L5: [2. Refuting the justification]

L6: [a. Appropriateness of accepting the thesis of emptiness of true existence]

.
\\ ###

\\ 389.

\\ If owing to non-existence you claim

\\ No reply is made to the other's thesis,

\\ Why would you not also prove

\\ Your own thesis which is refuted by reasons?

.
(i.e. Failure to prove any side of a duality: If you still think dualities are real and that one of the two opposite thesis must be right and the other false, then how come you cannot prove your thesis ? Your failure only proves that taking side in any duality is never wise; we need to transcend all dualities, because all views are flawed (never absolute), because everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.)

.
(-- If opponents of the Middle Way nevertheless choose to dispute this thesis, they must convincingly establish their own position, yet they repeatedly fail to do so.

-- Challenge: After first analyzing, you should either accept emptiness or make a reply.

-- Objection: It would be appropriate to make a reply if the slightest thing were accepted as truly existent, but since according to you everything is non-existent, how can any reply be made?

-- Answer: If you claim that no reply is made to the Madhyamika thesis because everything is non-existent, why should it not also be proper to prove your own thesis which is refuted by the reasons that prove emptiness? Since one cannot refute another's thesis without proving one's own, yours has become non-existent.)

L6: [b. Difficulty of finding a thesis refuting emptiness of true existence]

.
\\ ###

\\ 390.

\\ Though the world says it is easy

\\ To find reasons with which to refute,

.
(i.e. Assertion: Even if one is unable to prove one's thesis, it is said and well known in the world that reasons which refute others' theses are easy to find.)

.
\\ Why can the errors regarding

\\ The others' thesis not be stated?

.
(i.e. The perfection of emptiness is not refutable because it is not a thesis, not a view, not a system. It is a negation without affirming anything. It is like space, like true cessation. It depends on nothing. It is not produced.)

.
(-- Thus finding cogent arguments that invalidate the Madhyamika position is obviously not as simple as they claim.

-- Assertion: Even if one is unable to prove one's thesis, it is said and well known in the world that reasons which refute others' theses are easy to find.

-- Answer:

-- Since in that case you too must be in possession of those easily found reasons with which to refute, why are even you unable to fault the others' thesis, that of the Madhyamikas? Thus as you are unable to fault the others' thesis, reasons refuting emptiness are not easy to find.)

L4: [C. Showing parity of reasoning with regard to true existence or lack of true existence]

L5: [1. Both emptiness of true existence and true existence
are either equally established or not established merely by words]

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\ ###
\ 391.
\ If just by saying "They exist"
\ Things really did exist,
\ Why should they not also be non-existent
\ Just by saying "They do not exist"?

.
(i.e. It is not because it is written in the Abhidharma that it is absolutely true: We have already shown that it is absurd to pretend that things are inherently existing. So the teachings on this subject in the Abhidharma should not be taken as absolute, but merely as adapted skillful means for those not ready for the subtle emptiness, as provisional truths requiring further interpretation. They are not definitive truths like taught in the Heart of Wisdom Sutras, or in the teachings of Nagarjuna and his disciples.)

.
(-- If things were truly existent merely because one says they are, they would, by the same argument, be empty of true existence merely by saying they are; words alone do not affect reality.

-- If even without reasoning, but merely by saying the words "They exist," things existed as their own suchness, why should their emptiness of true existence not also be established merely by our saying the words "They do not exist truly"? The reasoning is the same in all respects. Therefore, rejecting assertions regarding the two extremes, we both should firmly establish the textual system free from all fabrications which asserts non-existence of the two extremes.)

.
L5: [2. Mere designation as truly existent will not make it so]

.
\ ###
\ 392.
\ If a thing is not non-existent
\ Because the term "existent" is ascribed,
\ Neither is it existent
\ because the term "existent" is applied.

.
(i.e. Otherwise, there are other books that says other things ... And it is not because someone say that this was said by the Buddha that it makes it an absolute truth. It only proves that it was used as another adapted skilful means in a certain occasion by the Buddha. The Buddha said to stay away from all extremes.)

.
(-- Assertion: If things do not exist ultimately, the designation "things exist" is incorrect and as unreasonable as terming a barren woman's child existent.

-- Answer: If things do not lack true existence because the designation "they are and exist" is ascribed, neither are they truly existent because the designation "they exist truly" is applied. Calling someone with good eyesight blind or someone with a short life long-lived does not make them so. Besides, if things could be accomplished by words alone, it would be just as reasonable to accept that they lack true existence as to think they are truly existent.)

.
L5: [3. If there were true existence because ordinary people use the verbal convention that things are truly existent, then being conventionally existent they could not exist as their own suchness]

.
\ ###
\ 393.
\ If everything is a convention
\ Because expressed by ordinary people,
\ How can anything which exists
\ As [its own] suchness be a convention?

(i.e. They could exist conventionally : On the other hand, it is ok to accept them as existing conventionally if they are so. But obviously this means that they do not exist on their own, inherently; they are mere conventions, like illusion. We do not deny that.)

-- Another's assertion: Words do not reveal an object's entity. If they did, one's mouth would burn when saying "fire" or be full when saying "pot." Therefore we assert that ordinary people all have means of expression and terms for that which is being expressed which do not touch an object's own entity.

-- Answer: Supposedly things all exist inherently and as conventions because ordinary people speak of them by means of words which do not touch their entity. But how can anything that exists inherently, existing as its own suchness, be a convention? It could only be ultimately existent.)

L4: [D. Refuting non-existence as the thesis]

L5: [1. Refuting that negation of truly existent things makes things utterly non-existent]

394.
If things are non-existent because
Things all do not exist,
In that case it is incorrect that all these
Concern the non-existence of things.

(i.e. Emptiness doesn't mean complete non-existence: that would be falling to the other extreme, nihilism. Even if everything is empty of inherent existence, they are still dependently arisen and functional. Everything is dependent on the mind labeling it, but still not from the mind only. Nothing is really existent, non-existent, both, neither. The duality existence vs non-existence has to be transcended by directly seeing the real nature of the duality itself – not taking one side and rejecting the other, nor accepting both, nor rejecting both.)

-- Assertion: Since you deny that things have true existence, things are non-existent.

-- Answer: If even the slightest thing is non-existent because things are not truly existent, it is incorrect that all Madhyamika theses concern the non-existence of things through refutation of previously existent truly established things, for there has never been any true existence.)

L5: [2. As there are no truly existent things that which is non-functional cannot be truly existent either]

395.
Since a thing does not exist
A non-thing cannot exist.
Without a thing's existence,
How can a non-thing be established?

(i.e. Another reason - Because something that has never inherently existed cannot be completely non-existent later: If there is no inherent production of anything, if everything is empty of inherent existence, then there could be no inherent cessation or anything. So emptiness could not mean complete-non-existence. – Nirvana is not produced by dropping everything, since nothing was existent in the first place. It is just a matter of directly seeing this, which is like seeing luminous space.)

-- Since truly existent functional things, the object of negation, do not exist, their non-functional negation cannot be truly existent. In the world a completely disintegrated thing is said to be non-functional. In keeping with this, a completely disintegrated pot would not be feasible if the pot had never existed. Thus how could the non-functional be truly existent, when there are no truly existent functional things? The existence of a dependent thing is not feasible without that on which it depends.)

L4: [E. Refuting that things are not empty because analogies and reasons to establish emptiness exist]

L5: [1. Showing the invalidity in the form of absurd consequences [of asserting that] there is true existence because there are reasons]

\ ###
\ 396.
\ If things are not empty because
\ They are empty by virtue of reasons,
\ The thesis would not be distinct from the reasons,
\ And thus the reasons would not exist.

.
(i.e. Could emptiness be an effect of a certain type of logic - reasons?: Let's suppose that it is a series of reasons that makes things empty of inherent existence, that they were not like this before the reasoning. This would mean the emptiness depends on those reasons, depends on a certain type of logic. That makes those reasons the "causes" and emptiness the "effect". Again using the method described above we could observe that this production is not inherent because the causes and the effect cannot be different or separate in time, nor the same or simultaneous. In other words there is no absolute causes (reasons) that could produce the effect (emptiness), and no absolute effect. Both are interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts, empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. And all this only confirm that everything is already empty even before any reasoning.)

.
(-- It is a mistake to think that things were previously truly existent, but are rendered non-existent through refutation of their true existence. They never existed in this way in the first place.

-- Assertion: In order to prove emptiness you must adduce reasons. Thus since the reasons exist, things are not empty, for like the reasons everything else is also truly existent.

-- Answer: If things were not empty because emptiness of true existence is established through reasons, and the thesis and reasons were inherently distinct, they would be unrelated. If the thesis were not inherently distinct from the reason but inherently one with it, they would have to be one and therefore what is to be proved could not be understood by depending on the reason. Then it follows that there are no correct reasons, since the fallacy of there being no reasons arises when one asserts truly existent things. Therefore all phenomena are established as lacking inherent existence.)

.
L5: [2. Showing the invalidity in the form of absurd consequences *[of asserting that]* things are not empty because there are analogies]

.
\ ###
\ 397.
\ If things are not empty because
\ There are analogies for emptiness,
\ Can one say, "Just like the crow,
\ So too the self is black"?

.
(i.e. Could emptiness be an effect of a certain type of logic - analogies?: Same reasoning as the previous verse in the case of "logical analogies", otherwise everything would be possible like the example in this verse.)

.
(About thesis and analogies:

-- Neither the existence of reasons nor analogies establishing emptiness can be used to support the thesis that things are truly existent, for the reasons and analogies themselves lack true existence.

-- Assertion: Since there are analogies for emptiness of inherent existence, such as the reflection and so forth, everything else, like those analogies, exists and is not empty.

-- Answer: Is the analogy related or unrelated to the reason's meaning? The first has already been precluded by the reasoning which refutes truly existent reasons. In the second case, if the meaning is established through an analogy unrelated to the reason, is one able to say, "Just as the crow is black, so too is the self," because they are alike in being functional things? One should be able to do so. Yet an analogy, merely by virtue of its existence, is not suitable as an analogy for true existence.)

.
L4: [F. Explaining the purpose of teaching emptiness]

.
\ ###
\ 398.
\ If things exist inherently
\ What good is it to perceive emptiness?
\ Perception by way of conception binds.
\ This is refuted here.

(i.e. The Middle Way about logic: The fact that all logic – reasons, analogies, ... – are empty of inherent existence doesn't mean that it is completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. We still can use illusions to help to go over other illusions – the important is that there is a progression toward reality. Even if emptiness and Dependent Origination are both empty of inherent existence, they are still dependently arisen and functional. They are efficient antidotes in their proper situation. – We have no choice, we cannot jump from here to Nirvana without a virtuous path, without a gradual deconditioning. A gradual path composed of more and more subtle methods and wisdom, of adapted skillful means, can help in gradually seeing through our conditioning / karma, and ultimately attain total Liberation. Using logic showing the absurdity of the illusions, of our conditioning, is part of this. -- It is not because everything is empty of inherent existence that everything is completely non-existent, useless, meaningless, or that we should drop everything, drop all paths, or kill ourselves. That would be jumping to the other extreme, and certainly not escaping samsara.)

(-- Question: If analogies, reasons and all things do not exist, what is the purpose of writing all the chapters of your treatise?

-- Answer: It is for the attainment of liberation and omniscience through understanding the meaning of suchness.

-- If things existed inherently, what good would there be in perceiving / emptiness, since it would be erroneous?

Thinking of things as truly existent causes one to accumulate actions and thereby wander in cyclic existence, but through fully understanding that all phenomena lack inherent existence, one gains release from worldly existence. Thus as long as one sees things as truly existent, because of conceptions which cling to their true existence, one is bound to cyclic existence. In this treatise, therefore, the truly existent person and aggregates, which are the referent objects of conceptions of true existence are refuted by an extensive collection of reasoning. Sutra says, "All phenomena are empty in that they do not exist inherently" and so forth. Accordingly, this was written to teach lack of inherent existence, which does not contradict the acceptance in our system of all dependently arising phenomena.)

L4: [G. Showing that conceptions of extremes of existence are erroneous]

\\ ###
\\ 399.
\\ To say one exists and the other does not
\\ Is neither reality nor the conventional.
\\ Therefore it cannot be said
\\ That this exists but that does not.

(i.e. About the Mind Only School – the duality world-mind: One of the extremes, or skillful means, consist of thinking that only the mind inherently exist, and that everything else are completely non-existent, total fabrications of the mind. But this theory doesn't make sense nor from an absolute point of view, neither from a conventional point of view. We have already shown that everything is empty of inherent existence because everything is dependently arisen, and that there is no exception at all, not even for the three gems, dependent origination or emptiness, causality space or time, parts or characteristics, ... A consciousness cannot exist without being conscious of something; these are co-dependent. – This is about the duality world-mind. Taking one side as absolute and the other not is not transcending the problem; it is falling into one extreme. The solution is to see their interdependence, their emptiness of inherent existence. Staying away from the four extremes: taking one side and rejecting the other, taking both sides, rejecting both sides. This applies to all dualities.)

(-- Among our own sectarians, Vijnaptivadins and all those who have not understood the actual meaning of the scriptures assert that consciousness is truly existent, and that external objects do not even exist conventionally. This is therefore shown to be wrong, for both are alike in existing conventionally but not ultimately.

-- To say that one exists and the other does not is not a presentation of reality, since both do not exist ultimately and are not ultimate truths. Nor is it a presentation of the conventional, since both exist conventionally and are conventional truths. Therefore all five aggregates exist conventionally but not ultimately, and so it cannot be said that mind and mental factors exist truly while external objects do not even exist conventionally. Thus Madhyamikas, too, accept both external objects and consciousness as they are known in the world.)

L4: [H. Impossibility of refuting through reasoning that which is free from extremes]

\\ ###
\\ 400.
\\ AGAINST ONE WHO HOLDS NO THESIS THAT [THINGS]

\ EXIST, DO NOT, OR DO AND DO NOT EXIT,
\ COUNTER-ARGUMENTS CANNOT BE RAISED
\ NO MATTER HOW LONG [ONE TRIES].

.
(i.e. The perfection of wisdom is not refutable because it is not a thesis, not a view, not a system. This perfection consist of staying away from all four extreme (Tetralemma)s: existence, non-existence, both, neither. It consist of staying away from all four positions concerning any duality. It is the Middle Way: not accepting any view, not rejecting any view. And since there is no other conceptual possibility, it is a negation without affirming anything. It is like space, like true cessation. It depends on nothing. It is not produced. It is indestructible, and has incommensurable powers. Why? Because it is almost perfectly in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything which is beyond any conceptualization and seen only by a Buddha.)

.
(-- Though things do not exist in and of themselves, they nevertheless exist. Through understanding their true mode of existence, we can gain freedom.
-- When assertions regarding true existence of things and so forth have been thoroughly refuted in this way, it is impossible to state any refutation of the assertions regarding emptiness.
-- Assertion: Even though we are unable to answer you at present, you will receive an answer—there will be those who make great effort on behalf of the Tathagata's teaching.
-- Answer: That is a futile hope! If we held a faulty thesis, it could be refuted by proving its converse.
-- No Madhyamikas hold the erroneous theses that things are inherently existent, that even the slightest thing is non-existent, that non-things are inherently both existent and non-existent, or neither. No matter how long one tries, no counter-arguments can be raised. You should understand that refuting skilled proponents of emptiness is as impossible as drawing pictures in space or causing space pain by beating it with an iron bar.
-- The Master Dharmadasa gave one analogy for each stanza of the first eight chapters. Fearing an excess of words, they have merely been cited but not elaborated in detail.)

.
L3: [The summarizing stanza:]

.
\ ###
\ The sun's light dispels all darkness.
\ Darkness has no power to destroy the sun's light.
\ The correct view destroys all extreme conceptions,
\ Banishing any opportunity for controversy.

.
(i.e. The perfection of Emptiness is irrefutable.)

.
\ ###
\ This is the sixteenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students.

.
This concludes the commentary on the sixteenth chapter, showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".

L1: [The Colophon - P.301]

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\
 ###
\
 This concludes the Treatise of Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas from the mouth of Aryadeva, the spiritual son at the Exalted Naga's feet. He was born miraculously from the heart of a lotus on the island of Sinhala. Having crossed the ocean of our own and others' tenets himself, he made the Middle Way most clear by distinguishing between correct and incorrect views.

.
\
 It was translated and [the meaning] settled in the temple of Ratnaguptavihara in the center of the glorious Kasmicri city of Anupamapura by the Indian abbot Suksmajana and the Tibetan translator Ba-tsap Nyi-ma-rak.

.
(This concludes the explanation both of the great trailblazer and Bodhisattva, the Master Aryadeva's work Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas and its commentary by the Master Candrakirti.

.
It was translated from the Indian into the Tibetan Language in the temple of Ratnaguptavihara in the center of the glorious Kasmiri city of Anupamapura by the Indian abbot Suksmajana, son of the Bramhmin Sajjana from the paternal line of the Brahmin Ratnavajra and by the Tibetan translator Ba-tsap Nyi-ma-drak who had consummate understanding of all texts on sutra and tantra. The meaning of the text was properly settled by explaining and listening to it.

.
~ May the one predicted by the Conqueror who attained the supreme state,
~ As well as Aryadeva and the glorious Candrakirti,
~ Who most clearly elucidated Nagarjuna's good system,
~ Rest victoriously on the crown of our heads.

.
~ May the one predicted by the Conqueror who attained the supreme state,
~ As well as Aryadeva and the glorious Candrakirti,
~ Who most clearly elucidated Nagarjuna's good system,
~ Rest victoriously on the crown of our heads.

.
~ Unable to bear misinterpretations of this system
~ Through the misconceptions of those who follow their own presuppositions,
~ Who lack the flawless eye of reasoning
~ And ignore the textual systems of the great trailblazers,

.
~ I have explained the words and meaning of this text simply,
~ Commenting in a clear, unconfused and complete way
~ On the paths that mature the mind and bring about release
~ For all people with a Mahayana disposition.

.
~ Since Aryadeva's thought is hard to ascertain
~ And my mind is poor, my acquired knowledge weak,
~ May my spiritual guides and deities
~ Forgive whatever errors there may be.

.
~ Through any immaculate virtue created by my efforts
~ To illuminate the good Madhyamika path free from extremes,
~ May all transmigrators, bound in the prison of worldly existence,
~ Attain the peerless happiness of liberation.

.
~ May I, too, in all future lives never be separated
~ From a spiritual guide of the supreme vehicle,
~ And through fully entering this path by listening, thinking and meditation,
~ May I obtain the state of an omniscient Conqueror.

.
This Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred" was written at the insistence of La-ma Nam-ka-sang-bo-wa who cherishes his precious precepts and holds the three sets of vows, and of La-ma Drak-seng-wa, exceptionally tireless in bearing the responsibility of spreading the Subduer's teaching -- they urged me again and again

from Upper Do-Kam with lavish and repeated flower-like offerings. It was written also at the insistence of Kun-ga Seng-ge of Dzay-tang, a great holder of the three sets of teachings who has heard the texts of sutra and tantra many times, and at the insistence of numerous other holders of the three sets of teaching.

It was written at Drok-ri-wo-che Gan-den-nam-bar-gyel-way-ling by the logician and fully ordained monk Dar-ma-rin-chen. This was made possible by the kind explanations received directly from the noble, venerable and holy Ren-da-wa Shon-nu-lo-dro, great follower of the Conqueror, with consummate understanding especially that all external and internal dependently arising things are like the reflection of the moon in water, and from the great omniscient one in this time of degeneration, whose prayer to holds the excellent teaching of the Conquerors is perfectly accomplished, the glorious and good foremost precious Lo-sang-drak-ba. They are the father and son, the dust beneath whose feet I have long and respectfully venerated.

The scribe was Rin-chen-cho-gyel, holder of the three sets of teaching and observant of his vows.

By virtue also of this, may the precious teaching of the Conquerors spread and flourish in all ways, and endure for a long time.)

L1: [Dedication]

May any merit resulting from this work help to keep alive the flame of the Buddha's teaching, protected and nourished by many centuries by the people of Tibet.

May it act as a cause for all living beings to enjoy peace and enlightenment.

L1: [Abbreviations]

.
Can. Peking edition of Candrakirti's Commentary on the "Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas", P5266, Vol.98.

.
Can. Candrakirti's Commentary on the "Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas", No.3865 of the Derge Tibetan Tripitaka - bsTan hgyur preserved at the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1977-82). .

Bo. bod sprul bstan pa'i nyi ma, Naga King's Ornament for Thought, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Middle Way" (Varanasi: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1987).

.
Gah. kah thog mkhan po ngag dbang dpal bzang, Sea Spray, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Middle Way" (Bylakuppe: Nyingmapa Monastery, 1984).

.
Gyel. rgyal tsab dar ma rin chen, Essence of Good Explanations (Varanasi: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1971).

.
Ren. red mda' ba gzhon nu bio gros, Commentary to Aryadeva's "Four Hundred Verses" (Varanasi: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1974).

.
Since work on this translation was carried out entirely in Dharamsala, India, most books on Madhyamika philosophy by modern western scholars were not available. It is therefore not out of a lack of respect or appreciation that no reference is made to these works. On the other hand the writing of Tibetan scholars on this subject was easily accessible and relevant passages which serve to clarify issues arising in Gyel-tsap's commentary have therefore been translated from the works of Dzong-ka-ba and others.
.

L1: [My Résumés]

.
Note: In my résumés I have tried to make the Middle Way, the need to combine method and wisdom together, to stay away from the four extremes, even more evident, because this is, I think, what makes any path a true Buddhist path, because only then is it IN ACCORD WITH THE REAL NON-DUAL NATURE OF EVERYTHING AS SEEN BY THE BUDDHA WHO HAS REALIZED THE PERFECT UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS. I have also tried to make it evident that the discussion is about showing that dependent origination, and the virtuous methods based on it, are still valid if properly understood as including no inherently existing elements (cause, effect, particles, space, time, causality, production) whatsoever. I have also stressed non-duality as not two, not one; as the inseparability of opposites, as co-dependent concepts.

.
So, contrary to the usual western misunderstanding of the relation between dependent origination and emptiness, THEY ARE NOT ONE, THEY ARE NOT THE SAME. Non-duality means: not two, not one; or not different, but still not the same. Transcending a duality doesn't mean to reject completely the difference between the two poles, to reject the duality. The two poles are interdependent, inseparable, not different but still not the same; not two, not one. The Middle Way consist of not accepting anything as absolute, not rejecting everything as completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. TO THINK THAT DEPENDENT ORIGINATION AND EMPTINESS ARE THE SAME IS TO FALL INTO ONE OF THE FOUR EXTREMES. It is a grave mistake that inhibits one from pursuing their real nature and progressing in more subtle wisdom; it is an easy trap for intellectual fools seeking absolute certainties. Their non-duality is more subtle than this; it is beyond all conceptualization. I hope my comments will help in realizing this.

.
Other complementary résumé presentations taken from the book are available in the Introduction, Preface and in each chapters.
.

L2: [Résumé of all chapters together]

On the path, we need both virtuous methods (based on dependent origination) and wisdom (based on emptiness) together, the two accumulations, corresponding to the Two Inseparable Truths. Only then is it efficient because in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything.

PART I. ACCUMULATING MERIT WITH CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS AND VIRTUOUS METHODS

PART I. A. ACCUMULATING MERIT USING CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS BASED ON THE HINAYANA POINT OF VIEW : the law of karma, dependent origination as presented in the Abhidharma, the three marks (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, no-self), the Four Noble Truths.

- 1) Meditation on death and impermanence.
- 2) Meditation on unsatisfactoriness.
- 3) Meditation on the foulness of the body.
- 4) Meditation on no-self.

PART I. B. ACCUMULATING MERIT USING SKILLFUL MEANS BASED THE MAHAYANA POINT OF VIEW: THE MIDDLE WAY

- 5) THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT MORALITY: acting using more wisdom than following strict rules: the importance of the Bodhicitta motivation, relativity, interdependence, love, compassion, cooperation, exchanging self with others.
- 6) THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH DISTURBING EMOTIONS: using temporary antidotes, and wisdom in order to transcend them definitively, to transmute them into the five wisdoms.
- 7) THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH VIRTUES AND METHODS: perfecting them by combining their practice with the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.
- 8) THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE PATH: using a gradual path composed of both method and wisdom together all the time until we can directly realize the real non-dual nature of the source of all disturbing emotions and thus transcend all karma.

PART II. ACCUMULATING WISDOM BY GRADUALLY REALIZING THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

- 9) NO ABSOLUTE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION, CAUSALITY, DETERMINISM, PATH (all causes, effects are empty of inherent existence because dependent on other causes and conditions, and interdependent). But there is conventional causality, causes and effect. Liberation is not a functional thing, not caused by an absolute path.
- 10) THERE IS NO SELF AS A PRIMARY CAUSE (free will), nothing permanent that is having rebirths, or that is being Liberated. But there is still continuity in samsara, and possible Liberation.
- 11) THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE TIME AS A PRIMARY CAUSE. Time, duration, impermanence, are relative to the existence of empty things.
- 12) THERE IS NO FINAL ABSOLUTE VIEW, OR SYSTEM. All views are flawed. But this has to be realized through a gradual path combining more and more subtle virtuous methods and wisdom – emptiness
- 13) THERE IS NO DIRECT PERCEPTION OF AN EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT REALITY BY OBJECTIVE SENSES AND INHERENT CONSCIOUSNESS. All perceptions are conditioned by accumulated karma. The world and the mind are both empty because interdependent, inseparable, non-dual.
- 14) THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM: All objects of the three realms (body, speech & mind) are: not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. All dualities can be transcended by examining the interdependence of the two poles, their inseparability. Everything is non-dual: not two, not one; even the dualities like whole & parts / characteristics, cause & effect, existence & non-existence, dependent origination & emptiness, the Two Truths, impure & pure, samsara & Nirvana. Everything is already pure in emptiness. There is no absolute basis for discrimination or non-discrimination.
- 15) THE PERFECTION OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION consists of uniting it with emptiness, transcending the duality.
- 16) THE PERFECTION OF EMPTINESS consists of uniting it with dependent origination, transcending the duality. That is the realization of THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS, realizing their inseparability, their non-duality. Those expressions point toward a realization which is beyond all conceptualization.

L2: [Résumé of each chapter]

L3: [PART I – Explaining the Stages of the Paths dependent on CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS (accumulation of merit)]

L4: [SECTION I - A : Showing how the aspiring altruistic intention is generated after training in the attitudes of a person of intermediate capacity by explaining elimination of the four errors.]

CHAPTER 1 - ABANDONING BELIEF IN PERMANENCE (death & permanent) – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT DEATH: Remembering death in order to abandon obsessions to worldly concerns, attachments, fears, and to have a strong motivation to practice the dharma. But not being obsessed by death either. On a more subtle level: everything is continually changing, impermanent.

CHAPTER 2 - ABANDONING BELIEF IN PLEASURE (pleasurable) – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT OUR BODY: not being slave to our insatiable body, not rejecting it completely as being useless; this precious human life is necessary to gain Enlightenment. Seeing the nature and relativity of pleasures. The three kinds of suffering: physical, mental, all-pervasive: everything that is impermanent is unsatisfactory. The five aggregates themselves are suffering if we cling to them. Developing compassion knowing everybody is in the same situation.

CHAPTER 3 - ABANDONING BELIEF IN CLEANNES (attractive) – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT OTHERS. Not being slave to our insatiable sensual desires. Using the temporary antidote to sensual desire: foulness of the body. Seeing the relative or conventional nature of what we find attractive or not. On the other hand, not rejecting others completely; the reality is that we are interdependent. So we need to develop love, compassion, cooperation.

CHAPTER 4 - ABANDONING PRIDE (self) – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT OUR INDIVIDUALITY. There is no absolute basis for the “I” and “mine”, or any status, or pride. Nothing that is impermanent, unsatisfactory and unclean can be the “self”. But that doesn’t mean that the self is completely non-existent, or that we should reject self-confidence completely. We need to see the relativity of status, our interdependence and feel compassion for others.

L4: [SECTION I - B : Explaining how to train in the deeds, having generated the practical altruistic intention.]

CHAPTER 5 - BODHISATTVA DEEDS – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT MORAL LAWS, THE BEST EFFICIENT WAY TO ACT AND GAIN POWER – THE WAY TO ACT LIKE A BUDDHA: Not accepting absolute moral laws, not rejecting morality completely. Going beyond simple morality based on absolute right and wrong, strict rules as taught in the Hinayana, and the belief in individual liberation. What counts is a more realistic motivation in all actions, Bodhicitta, and using gradual adapted skilful means (relativity) and wisdom (seeing the emptiness of all elements). This brings incommensurable efficiency and power, because it is more in accord with the real nature of everything: relativity, interdependence, the need for cooperation, emptiness, non-duality). What counts is not to follow absolute rules, but to find the best way to get out of samsara definitively; and the ego is one of the biggest obstacles.

CHAPTER 6 - ABANDONING DISTURBING EMOTIONS – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT CONTROLLING DISTURBING EMOTIONS: Not letting them go wild; but being able to recognize them and to use their specific temporary antidotes (based on the law of dependent origination) in order to diminish their negative consequences, otherwise we might get overwhelmed by negative karma. On the other hand, not getting obsessed by trying to control them all the time, because those antidotes are mere temporary solutions. The only final solution is to see their real nature (their dependence and emptiness of inherent existence) and to transmute them into the five wisdoms. So, in dealing with disturbing emotions, we need both methods (antidotes) and wisdom (emptiness) together all the time – the two accumulations; only then is it in accord with reality, with the two inseparable truths (not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither).

CHAPTER 7 - ABANDONING ATTACHMENT TO SENSE OBJECTS (THE WHOLE SAMSAARA) – THE MIDDLE WAY IN VIRTUOUS ACTIONS AND HAPPY REBIRTHS / SENSE OBJECTS: not grasping at any path, virtuous methods or the sense objects of happy rebirths, as if inherently existing, and not rejecting completely all virtues, all paths, as if useless (falling into the other extreme, nihilism). All actions are contaminated; all methods, virtuous or not, are ultimately creating bad karma; all higher rebirths will eventually end up in the lower realms. But, without accumulating enough merit, we do not have the requires conditions to develop insights, to directly realize the real nature of everything, and be totally Liberated; so, we will end up in those lower realms. What we need is both virtuous methods and wisdom together, the two accumulations. We need to perfect all Bodhisattva virtues / paramitas

by practicing them while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, action, object. There is no absolute method, only adapted skillful means that need to be combined with wisdom.

CHAPTER 8 - THOROUGHLY PREPARING THE STUDENT – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT TEACHING AND THE WAY TO GAIN LIBERATION: not grasping at any view or teaching, like dependent origination or emptiness, as if they were the absolute truth to be presented in all cases; and not rejecting all views completely as if useless (falling into the other extreme, nihilism). Liberation is not gained by getting to a final view, or by dropping all views and methods. Liberation is gained by realizing that the source of all disturbing emotions are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen (one implying the other). Until then, and to get there, we need a gradual path composed of both skillful means (virtuous methods) and wisdom adapted to the students and their actual conditioning (karma). It is usually better to start with the teachings of virtues and the law of dependent origination, not directly with subtle emptiness, because there is a high risk of provoking total rejection of all teachings or nihilism.

L3: [PART II – Explaining the stages of the paths dependent on ULTIMATE TRUTH (accumulation of wisdom)]

L4: [SECTION II - A - Extensively explaining ultimate truth.]

CHAPTER 9 - REFUTING PERMANENT FUNCTIONAL PHENOMENA – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT CAUSALITY, DETERMINISM, THE NEED FOR A PATH TO CAUSE LIBERATION: There is no absolute, permanent, inherent causes, effects, causality. But, on the other hand, conventionally speaking, nothing functional is without a cause, there is no effect without a cause, and no cause without an effect. All functional things are conventionally both cause and effect, dependently arisen and functional. So there is no absolute path, as a cause for Liberation, but still the conventional / relative paths are not useless, or without any effect at all – they are useful in reducing the negative consequences of accumulating bad karma. As for Liberation, it is not a functional thing; it is not an effect caused by any possible causes and conditions, or path, nor a cause of something else. Liberation is beyond causality space and time. It is about directly seeing the real nature of all of those. It is more like space, a negation that is not affirming anything.

CHAPTER 10 - REFUTING MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE SELF – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE SELF AND FREE WILL: There is nothing permanent or inherently existing that is creating karma, accumulating karma, having rebirths, and possibly being liberated. There is no inherent self. But this doesn't mean that there is completely no self at all, that there is no continuity of actions and their consequences in samsara, or that there is no possible Liberation at all. In fact, there is no need for any kind of permanent self to explain interdependence, continuity, memories, the cycle of the five aggregates and karma (the rebirths in samsara), the possibility of Liberation through a Noble Path. On the contrary a permanent self would not be able to produce impermanent effects, and would not care about any morality or path. And it is this belief in a permanent self that is the very root cause of all suffering. The mere functionality of the self proves its impermanence, its dependence, that it is both a cause and an effect, merely imputed by the mind. Liberation, like explained in chapter 8, is gained by accumulating both merit (through virtuous methods based on dependent origination), and wisdom (gradually realizing the emptiness of inherent existence of all dharmas, the inseparability of the Two Truths) together. So the self is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither.

CHAPTER 11 - REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT TIME – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT TIME: avoiding both extremes: not thinking it is absolute / existing, not thinking it is completely non-existent. There is no need for any kind of permanent time to explain interdependence, continuity, memories, the cycle of the five aggregates and karma (the rebirths in samsara), the possibility of Liberation through a Noble Path. On the contrary permanent past, present and future would negate the possibility of change, production, causality, morality, a path. Future cannot exist (now) otherwise there would be no need for further production, no need to work on it. Past and future cannot exist (now) otherwise they are not past and future. As for present, it is defined as actual duration of something (after origination, and before cessation), but this duration cannot be found because nothing can be found to exist by itself. There is no absolute basis for the definition and measurement of time. Even assuming the momentary model, duration or time cannot be directly seen. Time and duration (time interval) are two co-dependently arisen concepts. Even impermanence is not an absolute attribute; to say something exist (duration) and change (or is impermanent) is contradictory. Duration and impermanence are not two separate attributes, nor the same. A Yogi cannot see past and future as if they were truly existing; a Buddha does directly see the real non-dual nature of everything, the beginningless and endless flow of interdependence without any inherent existence in it. Things and time, defined on their duration, do not inherently exist; but they exist conventionally with all the imperfection that this brings.

CHAPTER 12 - REFUTING WRONG VIEWS – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT VIEWS: There is no final absolute view that is proposed here, no superficial absolute system easy to assimilate by ordinary people. On the contrary all views are said to be flawed, because based one way of another onto something inherently existing, which is contrary to the real non-dual nature of everything. But that doesn't mean that no system at all is proposed here, or that we should drop everything right now, or that everything is useless and meaningless. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination, or vice versa. While being in samsara, we still need adapted progressive skillful means combining both methods (based on non-violence) and wisdom (based on the emptiness of inherent existence) together in order to create the proper conditions, and ultimately to be able to see through all of our own conditioning (karma), and get completely Liberated from the whole samsara. – The chosen path need to be gradual because, there are prerequisites (open-mindedness, intelligence, enough accumulated merit, humility, compassion) before someone could be taught the subtle emptiness. Because of accumulated karma, pride, conceit and grasping at one's own view through habituation, to start with emptiness may create too much resistance, total rejection, or a fall into nihilism. On the other hand, only the realization of the emptiness of our own mind and of everything is the final antidote to all disturbing emotions; so all paths will always converge toward this point. Once we realize emptiness, all attachments and fears drop by themselves automatically; artificially dropping all attachments would not work, no more than superficial methods based on the ego. – The system proposed here is not absolute; it is also perceived as empty dependently arisen adapted skillful means. It doesn't have to be absolute (inherently existing) in the usual sense to be efficient; it cannot be. But it has to be based on the real non-dual nature of everything, which is not describable because beyond all conceptualization; but which we know, from the Buddha, that it is : not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither. So the perfection of any path is the combination of both more and more subtle methods and wisdom together all the time. Only then is it a valid Buddhist path.

CHAPTER 13 - REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT SENSE ORGANS AND OBJECTS – REFUTING DIRECT PERCEPTION OF AN OBJECTIVE REALITY INDEPENDENT OF THE MIND – Refuting the assumption that there are truly existing objects because we have direct objective perception of them. The Middle Way about a perception, senses and consciousness: there is no objective direct perception of an external reality by impartial sense organs and consciousnesses, but there is relative or conventional perception conditioned by our own accumulated karma. All objects of the three realms (desire, form, non-form / body, speech and mind) are empty of inherent existence, merely imputed by the mind, like illusions. But that doesn't mean that everything is completely non-existent; they exist conventionally, in co-dependence with our own mind. Everything is dependent on the mind, but not from the mind only. The way perception works is that we always perceive the basis first (the parts); then label the object; then have the impression of directly seeing the object -- the same for the parts themselves. Everything is both whole and parts; and everything is empty of inherent existence because dependent on its parts, because dependent on the mind labeling it and recognizing it, dependent on our own accumulated karma / conditioning. The world and the mind are both empty of inherent existence because interdependent, non-dual: not two, not one. So the perfection of perception is something like to realize the inseparability of appearances and mind, the inseparability of The Two Truths.

CHAPTER 14 - REFUTING EXTREME CONCEPTIONS [OF EXISTENCE, NON-EXISTENCE, BOTH, AND NEITHER] – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT ALL DUALITIES, ALL OPPOSITES, ALL FOUR EXTREMES: All objects of the three worlds, including all characteristics or pseudo elementary components, are: not inherently existent, not completely non-existent; not both; not neither; because they are all co-dependently arisen, interdependent, merely imputed by the mind. All dualities (like: whole & parts/characteristics, cause & effect, pure & impure, body & mind, world & mind, appearances & emptiness, the Two Truths, dependent origination & emptiness, samsara & Nirvana, right & left, etc.) are non-dual: one side doesn't include the other, nor are they different, or the same. Or for some dualities: it is not the case that one side is true and the other false, or that both are true, or that both are false. All opposites, all relations are like that, non-dual: not two, not one. This Tetralemma, describing the four extremes that should be avoided as absolute position, also describes the four possible skillful means or antidotes that could be used if understood as merely relative, conventional, not absolute. In the case of any duality, the wise would not accept any of the four possible positions as an absolute, nor would he reject them all, because then that would be falling into the fourth position, nihilism. He would not accept the duality as inherently existing, not reject it completely as if non-existent or useless. That is the Middle Way about any duality. No absolute, only adapted skillful means. And this is the method to solve all problems related to inherent existence and dualities: to prove that the four positions leads to absurdity if taken as absolute, and to be ready to use any of them as a skillful means when required. It means not discriminating thinking there is an absolute basis for objective discrimination, not non-discriminating thinking there is no basis at all for discrimination and that it would be useless. Transcending the two poles of any duality means realizing their interdependence, their emptiness, and thus not accepting the duality nor rejecting it. -- As we will see, the perfection of wisdom, of understanding Dependent Origination and Emptiness (another duality), consist of realizing their non-duality

(not two, not one), their inseparability, the perfect Union of the Two Truths beyond all conceptualization.

CHAPTER 15 - REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT CHARACTERISTICS [OF PRODUCTS] – PRODUCTION / ORIGINATION, DURATION, CESSATION – THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT DEPENDENT ORIGINATION / PRODUCTION: there is no possible direct observation of inherent production, origination, duration and cessation, because inherent cause & effect are impossible; they cannot exist separately or at the same time; they could not be different or the same; they are all interdependent, merely imputed by the mind. The time of production itself cannot be pinpointed. It means all production should be seen like an illusion. So the law of dependent origination itself, the Wheel of Life, also have to be reinterpreted with more wisdom (emptiness) like in the case of methods and virtues. But that doesn't mean that they are totally non-existent - or that the teaching of dependent origination is completely false and should be dropped; that all paths based on it should be dropped right now. There is still conventional production, origination, duration, cessation; conventionally objects of the three realms still exist and should still be considered impermanent. The model of dependent origination as explained by the Buddha is still valid/ useful while being in samsara; it is just that it should be understood as implying no inherently existent cause, effect, or causality in it. No absolute truth here either. This teaching is also another adapted skillful means, a conventional truth. It is useful as a temporary imperfect model, as a framework to explain the causes of suffering and the path leading toward happiness; but it should not be grasped on as if it was an absolute truth, as if its elements were absolute or inherently existing. This mistake would inhibit the full completion of the path and the attainment of complete Enlightenment. So, even if there is no absolute dependent origination, we still need a gradual path composed of more and more subtle methods and wisdom; in order to get more and more in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything, creating less and less causes for suffering / karma. -- Things are not inherently produced; they do not last, grow old, and then ceased and completely become non-existent; that is true only conventionally. So, the perfection of Dependent Origination, beyond conceptualization, is to unite it with Emptiness. That is the meaning of the Union of The Two Truths, their inseparability.

L4: [SECTION II - B - Showing how to meditate on settling [the procedure between] spiritual guides and students by way of [explaining] the purpose of the CHAPTERs and eliminating remaining counter-arguments by misguided opponents.]

CHAPTER 16 - REFUTING REMAINING COUNTER-ARGUMENTS - THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT EMPTINESS: emptiness itself is empty of inherent existence; it is not the absolute truth, the final system which is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. All objects of the three realms (desire, form, non-form, or body, speech and mind) are all empty of inherent existence. There is no exception. Even the three causal Gems (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) are empty of inherent existence. They are all empty because interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts, merely imputed by the mind. But, again, this doesn't mean that everything is inherently existing because emptiness is empty; or that everything is completely non-existent, useless because everything is empty; or that we should drop everything right now. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination, or vice versa; they are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they imply each other. Even if everything is empty of inherent existence, everything is still dependently arisen and functional, useful like Buddha activities if seen for what they really are, if used while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. -- Emptiness is irrefutable because it doesn't pretend to be an absolute system, to be inherently existing. As a concept, as the antidote to inherent existence, it is just another conventional truth, another adapted skillful means. It is a concept co-dependently arisen with the concept of inherent existence, or with the concept of dependent origination based on inherently existing causes and effects as explained in the Abhidharma. They come together, and they go together: without anymore belief in inherent existence or absolute production / dependent origination, there is no more need for its antidote, emptiness; and vice versa, without the danger of falling into the extreme of nihilism, thinking that emptiness is an absolute, there is no more need for the proof of dependent origination. Dependent Origination and Emptiness form an apparent duality, like existence and non-existence, like method and wisdom, like the Two Truths, like pure and impure, like Nirvana and Samsara. But their real nature is non-dual: not two, not one; not different, not the same; inseparability. Their real nature is beyond any description, beyond all conceptualization; only a Buddha has realized their real non-dual nature. So, the perfection of Emptiness, beyond conceptualization, is to unite it with Dependent Origination. That is the meaning of the Union of The Two Truths, their inseparability. And the perfection of the perception of all objects of the three realms is to see their non-duality, and the inseparability of the three realms. The perfection of those objects (body, speech and mind) are the three inseparable resulting Gems, the inseparable trikaya.

ONE LAST WORD: as I understand it today, there is nothing to do, nothing to not do, nothing to get, nothing to drop, nothing to see, nothing to not see. Nirvana is not caused by our own effort or dropping. Nothing gets perfected, nothing gets purified, nothing becomes united or inseparable. Everything is already like that. Everything is already pure; everything is equal, non-dual, in emptiness. We already have the Buddha-nature, the inseparable trikaya. The three

realms have always been inseparable. Nirvana is not somewhere else different than samsara, nor is it the same. It is just a matter of directly seeing the real nature of our own mind and thus of everything as they really are right now (but to be able to see this we need enough merit, and a path to get there). And directly seeing this is not like perceiving something, or like understanding something; they say it is like seeing luminous space: a negation that is affirming nothing, not even nothingness. The closer we can get using concept is to say that there is no inherent existence, but still conventional dependent origination and functionality; or not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither; or the Union of The Two Truths; or inseparability of appearances and emptiness; etc.

~ Karikas 25:24

~ "The cessation of accepting everything [as real]

~ is a salutary (siva) cessation of phenomenal development (prapanca);

~ No dharma anywhere has been taught by the Buddha of anything."

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L2: [Résumé Table:]

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1 -- Death & impermanence
 - First, remember death, also impermanence of everything
 - No being obsessed by it as if not normal; not wasting this life
- .
2 -- Our body & pleasures
 - Not being slave to our impermanent insatiable body – everything is unsatisfying because impermanent
 - Not rejecting it as completely useless; it is part of our precious human life; relativity of pleasures; developing compassion
- .
3 -- Others' body, cleanness
 - Not being slave to our insatiable sensual desires; temporary antidote: seeing the foulness of the body
 - Not rejecting others completely – we are interdependent, need to develop love, compassion, cooperation; relativity of desires
- .
4 -- Pride and egoism
 - No absolute permanent basis to be proud of, no self
 - Not rejecting self-confidence; relativity of status; compassion
- .
5 -- Morality, the best efficient way to act and gain power
 - Not thinking there is absolute laws to strictly obey, or absolute precise objective cold wholesomeness and unwholesomeness that everyone should know or else...
 - Not rejecting morality completely as if useless; what counts is a motivation based on reality, bodhicitta, using adapted skillful means (relativity) & wisdom (seeing the emptiness of all items)
- .
6 -- Disturbing emotions
 - Not letting them go wild, not rejecting all controls; recognizing them & using specific temporary antidotes
 - Not getting obsessed about control either – the goal is to see their real non-dual nature & to transmute them into the 5 wisdoms
- .
7 -- Virtuous actions and happy rebirths / sense objects
 - No absolutely virtuous practices & desirable rebirths, all actions are contaminated; all rebirths stink in samsara
 - Not rejecting all paths as if useless; perfecting all virtues / paramitas by combining them with wisdom (emptiness of the 3)
- .
8 -- The way to teach & gain Liberation
 - Liberation is gained by realizing that the source of all disturbing emotions are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen (one implying the other).
 - Taught using a gradual path composed of both skillful means & wisdom adapted to students, and starting by teaching virtues & dependent origination, otherwise high risks of rejection & nihilism
- .
9 -- Causality, cause & effect, determinism, Liberation
 - No absolute / permanent / inherent cause, effect, causality; Liberation is not caused by the path; no self is Liberated
 - Not completely rejecting causality, path & self; everything is still conventional causes & effects / dependent; Liberation is like space
- .
10 -- The Self, free-will
 - No permanent / inherent self having rebirths, or Liberated
 - There is still continuity in samsara, karma. Liberation still possible
- .
11 -- Time, impermanence
 - No real objective absolute time; nothing exist & change
 - There is relative time; impermanent things exist conventionally
- .
12 -- Views
 - No evident final view, no (superficial) absolute system easy to assimilate is proposed here. All views are flawed.

----- But we still need adapted progressive skillful means using both methods (non-violence) & wisdom together to gain Liberation

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13 -- Perception, senses, composites

----- No direct objective perception of an independent inherent world by inherent senses & consciousness – everything in the 3 worlds is merely imputed by the mind, like illusions

----- The world & the mind are not completely non-existent either. There is conventional perception conditioned by our accumulated karma. Interdependence with mind, but not from the mind only.

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14 -- Dualities (transcending opposite extreme conceptions) - METHOD

----- All objects & characteristics are: not inherently existent, not completely non-existent; not both; not neither; bcz interdependent, merely imputed by the mind. All dualities like: whole & parts/characteristics, causes & effects, pure & impure are non-dual: one side doesn't assimilate the other, nor are they different, or the same. All opposites / relations are non dual: not two, not one.

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15 -- Production / Dependent Origination

----- No visible / inherent production, origination, duration, or cessation; cause & effect are empty because interdependent

----- There is conventional production, existence ... impermanence, causes & effects; dependent on the mind, on accumulated karma

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16. -- Emptiness, 3-Gems

----- No absolute: Even Dep.Or. & Emptiness, the 3 Gems, are empty, interdependent, non-dual: not two, not one; inseparable.

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[End]